



Redd Barna

LEAVING NO CHILD BEHIND

**CONSOLIDATED END OF
PROGRAMME REPORT**

**NORAD FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT
2019-2023**

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Girl 13, attending a mathematics lesson in Uganda

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Reader's Information

This is the End-of-Programme Results Report covering the period 2019 to 2023, building on the Mid-Term Report from 2021 and referencing back to the Baseline Report from 2019. In this report we provide an account of key results achieved throughout the full agreement period in relation to the planned goals, as described in the proposal, analysing the project's contribution to change at outcome level and assessing the project's contributions to effects at impact level. The report shares new insights and learnings from the data collected at end-line, including qualitative indicators and other country-led studies, evaluations, or other forms of knowledge generation, comparing data collected at baseline and End-line, where such comparisons were possible and meaningful.

Endline data collection was conducted in 11 out of 12 reporting countries, and a total of 10 countries were able to collect data comparable with baseline, enabling the documentation of progress over the five years of programme implementation. Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) could not carry out data collection due to the war that broke out on the 7th of October 2023; while Myanmar did collect end line data, however the changes in the security-situation since 2020 led to adaptations in the implementation modality and data-collection methodologies, hence their data is only comparable from 2021 to 2023.

The report is structured into 5 chapters, starting with an executive summary in which we address the key questions from Norad's reporting instructions to provide a brief and concise analysis of the programme results achieved and learnings and reflections on sustainability. This information is further elaborated on in the body of the report. The first chapter deep dives into the thematic areas / issues

addressed over the 5 years of implementation of the programme, presenting the overarching analysis of achievements, remaining challenges, learnings and reflections on sustainability. This is followed by similar reflections for the cross-cutting issues under the second chapter: Inclusion of children with disabilities, gender equality, climate and the environment, partnerships, child participation, education technology, anti-corruption, cost efficiency and effectiveness, child safeguarding and risk analysis.

In chapter 3 of the report, we present country-specific reflections, following the same structure of achievements, challenges, learnings, risks and concluding with reflections on sustainability. Chapter 4 of the report presents an overall assessment of sustainability of results and lessons learned, reflecting on how results are likely to be maintained after the completion of the programme period.

The last chapter presents a complete list and summary of evaluations and reviews carried out through the implementation of the programme.

The "Leaving no Child Behind" program contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals: Issue 1: 4 Quality Education; Issue 2: 3 Health, 5 Gender Equality, 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and Issue 3: 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. In addition, under cross-cutting issues: 5 Gender Equality, 10 Reduce Inequalities, 13 Climate Action and 17 Role of partnerships to achieve sustainable development.

This report includes as annexes (1) the financial report and audit; (2) the updated results framework with end-line data; (3) the consolidated risk matrix and (4) all evaluations not previously shared with Norad, as listed in chapter 5.

Acronyms

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|-----------------|--|
| ACRWC: | African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of children | MEAL: | Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning |
| ASCATED: | Association of Training and Technical Assistance in Education and Disability | MINEDUC: | Ministry of Education (Guatemala) |
| ASER: | Annual Status of Education Report | MoGEI: | Ministry of General Education and Instruction (South Sudan) |
| ASRHR: | Adolescents Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights | MP: | Public Prosecutor's Offices (Guatemala) |
| ATMIS: | African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (Somalia) | MT: | Midterm |
| BL: | Baseline | NHRI: | National Human Rights Institutions |
| BLN: | Basic Literacy and Numeracy | NiEP: | National Inclusive Education Policy |
| BRICE: | Building Resilience in Crisis through Education | NORAD: | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (General) |
| CAAC: | Children Affected by Armed Conflict | OPD: | Organisation of Persons with Disabilities |
| CAM: | Cost Allocation Methodology (General) | oPt: | Occupied Palestinian Territory |
| CBCPM: | Community-based child protection mechanisms | OOSC: | Out of School Children (Lebanon) |
| CBE: | Community-based education | PAT: | Partner Assessment Tool |
| CBF: | Colombian Institute for Family Welfare | PDEP: | Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting |
| CCR: | Child Rights Coalition (Nepal) | PDET: | Positive Discipline in Everyday Teaching |
| CCSA: | Child-centred social accountability | PFA: | Psychological First Aid |
| CEG: | Community Education Committees | PHP: | Physical and humiliating punishment |
| CEP: | Country Engagement Plan (Lebanon and Guatemala) | PSEAH: | Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment |
| CFLG: | Child-Friendly Local Governance | PSS: | Psychosocial Support |
| CEGRD: | Risk and disaster school management committee (Mozambique) | PTA: | Parents Teachers Association |
| CMC: | Community Mobilisation Committee | PWG: | Partnership Working Group |
| COOM: | Country Office Operating Model (Lebanon) | PwV: | Parenting without Violence |
| COP: | United Nations climate change conference | QLE: | Quality Learning Environment |
| CP: | Child Protection | QLF: | Quality Learning Framework |
| CPD: | Continuous Professional Development (Malawi) | RENAMO: | Mozambican National Resistance |
| CRC: | Committee on the Rights of the Child | SC: | Save the Children |
| CRG: | Child Rights Governance | SCN: | Save the Children Norway |
| CRM: | Complaint Response Mechanism | SEL: | Social and Emotional Learning |
| CRPD: | Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities | SIPs: | School Improvement Plans (Colombia) |
| CSOs: | Civil Society Organisations (General) | SLaM: | School Leadership and Management |
| CSW: | Community Social Worker | SMC: | School Management Committee |
| CWC: | Child Welfare Committees | SNAP: | Student Needs Action Pack |
| CwD: | Children with Disabilities | SRHR: | Sexual and Reproductive Health, and Rights |
| CZOP: | Children Zone of Peace | STAR: | Societies Tackling AIDS Through Rights (Malawi) |
| DNEP: | National Directorate for Primary Education (Nepal) | SZoP: | Schools as Zones of Peace |
| DNFP: | National Directorate for Teacher's Training (Nepal) | T4D: | Technology for Development |
| DRM: | Disaster Risk Management | TDP: | Territorial Development Plan |
| DRR: | Disaster Risk Reduction | TLCs: | Temporary Learning Centers |
| IPCC: | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change | ToC: | Theory of Change |
| LAC: | Latin America and the Caribbean (General) | ToTs: | Training of Trainers |
| LCRCs: | Local Child Rights Committees (Nepal) | TPD: | Teacher Professional Development |
| LCSO: | Local Civil Society Organisations | UNCRC: | United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| LWiE: | Learning and Well-being in Emergency | UPR: | Universal Periodic Review |
| | | VDC: | Village Development Committees |
| | | WCPC: | Ward Child Protection Committees |
| | | WCRCs: | Ward Child Rights Committees (Nepal) |
| | | WGQ: | The Washington Group Questions |



Birgitte Lange, CEO of Save the Children Norway.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

FOREWORD

The foreword of the “Leaving No Child Behind” programme proposal submitted to Norad in 2018, made reference to the dramatic changes the world had witnessed impacting children’s lives. We did not expect to have an easy road ahead of us, but little did we know that the world would face a pandemic affecting all programme countries at once and severely limiting our capacity to implement planned activities. Added to this, the impact of climate change increasingly becoming a threat to people’s lives and disrupting the regular functioning of societies, having to grapple constantly with floods, droughts, hurricanes, wildfires. Such events are fuelling migration, driving communities into internal displacement, forcing children out of schools, and making our work ever more difficult and ever more important.

Norad’s statistics report from 2023 “[tall some teller](#)”, present us with a worrisome picture where nearly 40% of the world’s population are living in conflict affected areas, and the number of people in need of humanitarian help has doubled since 2018. When new conflicts and wars take central stage and come closer to home, like the wars in Ukraine and oPt, other long-lasting conflicts become forgotten crisis and continue to threaten children’s rights: Syria, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Sudan, Myanmar, Niger, to mention but a few,

When we developed the Norad framework proposal back in 2018, we strengthened our commitment to the sustainable development goals and to

our contribution to leaving no one behind, fulfilling a promise and an opportunity for children. Despite all the challenges faced over the past five years, we can say that we have taken significant steps in the right direction: More children in the schools supported through the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme can now read, write and do math than when we started. More children with disabilities are accessing education and the number of girls dropping out of schools due to pregnancy and child marriage has been reduced. More girls are returning to school after pregnancy. Fewer children are experiencing violence and physical punishment at home and at school. Laws are changed and policies implemented, with an emphasis on children’s engagement, and at the heart of all of this is a stronger civil society championing children’s rights.

Save the Children Norway extends a heartfelt thanks to Norad for a partnership built on trust. As we close the chapter on the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme, we look forward to what the new chapter in our partnership will bring, as we together embark on “Transforming the future – for and with children”.



Birgitte Lange
CEO of Save the Children Norway



Girls at school in Malawi.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Securing children's right to education and protection, with a focus on gender equality and inclusion, *Leaving No Child Behind!* This was the vision for the Norad-funded framework agreement implemented between 2019-2023 in 12 countries. This ambitious programme set out to address three key issues:

- A learning crisis, characterized by limited access to a quality education and a safe learning environment, particularly for the most deprived.
- Negative social norms, coupled with lack of child friendly protection systems, perpetuating violence against children, especially the most deprived.
- Governments falling short on their obligations to ensure that children's rights are respected, and mechanisms to mobilize and allow children to participate meaningfully are weak.

These challenges were only worsened through the implementation period by the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite this, the programme has attained significant achievements across all 3 issues:

Highlights of achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children learn and are safe

The main goal under issue 1 is that all girls and boys learn and are safe in a quality learning environment. The results achieved as demonstrated by the End Line (EL) data, show truly that the holistic approach enshrined in the Quality Learning Framework, has stood the test.

In seven out of ten countries where comparable data was available, there are now **more children meeting expected literacy proficiency levels**, than at the beginning of the programme (in Colombia, Nepal, Somalia, Guatemala, Mozambique, Uganda, Malawi). The largest progress is seen in Colombia (+39%-points) and Nepal (+28%-points), where key elements of success are associated to solid local partnerships and education authorities, integrated and context-adapted approaches such as child clubs, community education committees, catch up clubs, access to variety of educational materials and technology, and strong engagement from parents and communities. Although Myanmar is not included among the seven countries referred to under this

indicator, it is worth mentioning that children's learning outcomes increased by 23%-points from mid-term in 2021 to end-line in 2023. This result is however not comparable with baseline values due to changes in programmatic approaches from Home-based Learning (HBL) to Community-based Education (CBE).

The number of **children enrolled in schools** continued to increase in 2023, reaching close to 540,000 (G/B: 50%), which is 40,000 more compared to 2022. In addition, 15,000 children (G/B: 50%) in Myanmar attended CBE. Similarly, there is an increase in **children with disabilities documented to be in school**. In 2019 children with disabilities represented 2.6 % of the school population, in 2023 they were 5%.

Despite the increase in enrolment of children with disabilities, there persists a significant **gap in their learning outcomes**. At endline in Malawi, South Sudan and Nepal the share of children with disabilities meeting the threshold was lower by 11%-point, 12%-points and 16%-points respectively. On the other hand in Lebanon and Uganda the share of children with disabilities meeting the threshold was in fact higher than their peers, with 5%-points and 3%-points respectively.

A lot of work remains to be done in particular in relation to enrolment and learning outcomes for children with disabilities. Continuing the work to increase enrolment of out-of-school children by addressing physical, economic, and social barriers hindering access, will be a focus area in the next framework period as will the focus on inclusive education to strengthen all children's learning.

In relation to **children feeling safe in their learning environment**, the EL data showed a significant decrease in physical punishment in schools. We have documented a 21%-point reduction in children hit by teachers from baseline to endline, surpassing our original target. Both genders experienced equal declines, yet boys still experience more physical punishment than girls. Across 8 countries, more children felt safe at school in 2023 compared to 2019, with South Sudan showing the most progress (+44%-points). In Mozambique, the strategies for reintegration to school and the focus on prevention of early marriage resulted in 98% of schools having emotional and psychological protection standards, overachieving the target of 90% and representing a remarkable 79%-point increase from baseline.

We have also seen good progress in **teachers demonstrating professional teaching practices**, with increases from 2019 to 2023 in all 10 reporting countries. Seven countries increased with more than 25%-points, meaning the programme overall surpassed the endline target. Largest progress is seen in Lebanon (+81%-point), Nepal (+79%-point) and Niger (+69%-point), while a slower progress is seen in Uganda (+11%-points), Malawi (+19%-points) and Mozambique (+20%-points). These results have been

achieved through a comprehensive Teacher Professional Development (TPD) approach, including mentoring, peer learning, and self-directed learning. The programme, with ongoing mentorship and focus on inclusive pedagogy, strengthened teacher capacities, especially in supporting children with disabilities.

During the programme period more than 15,500 educational personnel has been trained in the 12 programme countries. Close to 10,000 teachers (F:47%; M:53%), more than 2,000 ministry of education staff (F:51%; M:49%), and close to 3,500 education facilitators and volunteers (F:68%; M:32%).

In line with our Theory of change, there is a strong **advocacy and policy change** component also in the education programme, to support systems strengthening at local and national level. Over the 5 years of implementation of the programme, 21 governmental documents have been developed or adapted with the support from Save the Children surpassing the original target of 17. These are general education policies/strategies (10), early childhood policies (3), and policy and plans on inclusive education (4) and safe schools (4). For example, SC has supported Inclusive education policy development in Mozambique, Uganda and Somalia in the reporting period, contributing to the development of inclusive education policies at national (Mozambique, Uganda) and sub-national levels (Somalia/ Puntland). This shows a clear linkage between the *Leaving No Child Behind* and the Together for Inclusion programmes and the particular focus on strengthening the concerted efforts related to Inclusive Education from the school to the policy level.

In Malawi, SC supported the Ministry in the development of the new Learners' Council guidelines and its launch in 2022. This helped institutionalize child participation in primary schools. When Colombia endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in 2022, it was following years of engagement from several organizations including SC, who could demonstrate the impact of safe schools programming with the support from Norad.

Issue 2- Children are protected from violence and abuse

Under Issue 2 the *Leaving No Child Behind* Programme is dedicated to the overarching ambition for all children to live a life free from violence and abuse. Under this goal, we have been implementing child protection programmes in 12 countries. Of these, 5 countries have implemented child marriage and teenage pregnancies prevention programmes, integrating child protection and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming (Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda and Nepal).

At end-line, we see the results of our work at all levels of society. In Uganda, Malawi and Mozambique more vulnerable girls are continuing their education after dropping out of school, due to child marriage or pregnancy. In Malawi, at BL, 26% (131)

of girls were returning to school compared to 38% (484) girls at EL. In Uganda the same figures show an increased from 91 girls at BL to 690 girls at EL (85% being teenage mothers); while in Mozambique at BL, only 20% of girls (30) were re-enrolling after marriage or pregnancy, compared to 96% at both MT and EL (25 and 22 girls), reaching the target of a 96% readmission rate.

While Nepal does not report on the aggregated global Norad indicator, the country programme is monitoring if girls and boys affected by child marriage and teenage pregnancies drop-out or continue in school. 2023 EL results in the three reporting countries Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda found that a total of 1,196 girls re-enrolled in school after dropping out due to child marriage or teenage pregnancies, which is a significant progress from 252 girls in 2019, surpassing the EL target of 1,000 girls. This is mainly due to the targeted outreach to identify and support children affected by, or at risk of child marriage and pregnancies, through the work of children clubs, para social workers and ward child rights committees. Simultaneously, the programme coordinated with schools to ensure the children's enrollment by offering remedial classes and connecting children with child clubs, adolescent girls' groups, and youth clubs based on their age groups to enhance their confidence and motivation to continue schooling.

All countries with child marriage and teenage pregnancies programmes have **integrated child protection and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming**. Over the 5-years of programming, Mozambique achieved an increase of 16%-point in adolescents' girls and boys ASRH knowledge to 64% (G: 62%/B: 66%) at EL. More than 25,600 adolescents' girls and boys were provided with access to ASRHR services and information through mobile health brigades in remote communities, training of health professionals, and through provision of comprehensive sexuality education. In Uganda, more than 34,300 (G: 60%/B: 40%) in and out of school adolescents were reached with ASRHR information and services resulting in a 20%-points of adolescents' knowledge of ASRHR at EL (to 33%). This increase is mainly attributed to the strengthened capacity of male and female teachers who delivered regular ASRHR and life skills sessions to in and out of school adolescents as guided by School Family Initiative resources and the integrated ASRHR community outreaches supported by qualified health worker which enabled the programme to reach out school adolescent with ASRHR information.

Social norms change is a long-term process that may take decades to achieve lasting changes. Still the EL findings are showing promising results – more community members are opposing the harmful practice of child marriage now compared to 5 years ago. There is an **increase in the number of communities that take collective social actions against child**

marriages. 53% (94 out of 181) of the communities had taken collective social action at EL compared to 11% (18) at BL. An overall progress of 42%-points. Mozambique saw the most progress with an increase of 51%-points, followed by Nepal (47%-point increase) and Uganda (46%-point increase).

Looking at the broader violence prevention work, when assessing **children experiencing physical and/or psychological aggression** by parents or caregivers across 5 reporting countries (Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Lebanon) the EL found that 62% of children (G:63%/ B:61%) had experienced physical and/or psychological aggression by parents or caregivers, representing a 26%-points reduction from BL at 88% (G: 88%/ B: 87%), and reaching the EL target of 62%. While a reduction is seen in all 5 countries, the most progress was seen in Somalia (-39%-points reduction), followed by South Sudan (-33%-points) and Nepal (31%-points). While observing the attitudes towards the use of violence in parenting, we see a significant change among parents and caregivers, with a lower acceptability of using punishment to discipline their children, from 65% (F: 67%; M: 57%) at BL to 20% at EL (F:21%; M: 17%) across Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Lebanon. This surpassed the EL target of 30%.

From a systems-strengthening perspective, we see that **local child protection structures have been strengthened, coordination between formal and informal child protection structures has improved, and the number of child protection cases being reported and supported has increased significantly.** After 5-years of the programme the end line data collection shows that 75% of Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPM) were actively performing their tasks in identifying, registering, referring and/or responding to child protection cases, a 40%-points increase from BL (35%), surpassing the target on 70% by 5%-points.

While we see significant progress across most child protection indicators in all the reporting countries, it is important to recognize the negative impact of Covid-19 in our work. The child protection challenges we encountered at the start of the programme, got severely aggravated during the pandemic. Evidence of this can be seen in the disappointing results in the efforts to reduce the proportion of girls dropping out of school because of child marriage and teenage pregnancy. Malawi is one of the three reporting countries where an increase of 10%-points in drop-out rates from BL to EL was documented, while Uganda reported a humble decrease of 1%-point. Although the re-enrolment rates increased in all three countries, more work remains to be done to reverse the trend of child marriage in these countries.

Issue 3- Child Rights Governance

Despite global progress towards implementing child rights, governments fall short of their commit-

ments under the Child Rights Convention (UNCRC). To address these challenges, under Child Rights Governance (CRG), this programme has worked to strengthen civil society including children to demand children's rights, improve accountability of governments and other duty bearers through monitoring the implementation of children's rights, and strengthen government institutions to implement child rights.

We see the impact of our efforts on the improved capacity of civil society. During the last five years and through the *Leave No Child Behind* programme, **Save the Children** collaborated with 181 local partners, of which 44 are government entities and 137 are Local Civil Society Organizations (LCSOs). The programme developed the capacity of 96 LCSOs who have reached, on average, 86% of the capacity enhancement milestones that they set at the start of the programme. At a time when civil society and civic space is under threat in many countries, this programme has contributed towards strengthening the financial, organisational, operational, thematic and advocacy capacity of CSOs to demand the realisation of child rights.

Save the Children and our partners have also contributed towards the submission of a total of 33 supplementary civil society reports to UN and regional monitoring bodies. Out of these, seven were child-led reports (children developed reports on their own), and the rest were informed by children's opinions and priorities. A further eight supplementary reports have been prepared and ready for submission, two of which were child-led. This achievement not only highlights the improved capacity of civil society organisations to hold the governments to account for delivering on their commitments to children, but it is also a strategy for bringing children's and communities' concerns and ideas up to the top decision-making levels of each country. We note that in several instances, governments have accepted key recommendations/concluding observations and acted on them to deliver on their commitments to children's rights, a process which will continue to impact children in the years to come.

The impact of the programme is also clear in the **institutional changes we have affected at different levels of government, in the form of policies or legislative changes.** We have worked with children, CSOs and strategic partners to draft, advocate for and support the adoption/amendment of 8 laws, 24 policies and 102 other guidelines, rules and procedures in how the formal government structures deliver child rights. These changes have come about through long-term, concerted and consultative processes which often have had the added value of raising awareness and mobilising support for child rights, and crafting spaces for engagement between rights-holders and duty-bearers.

Key cross-cutting issues for *Leaving No Child Behind*

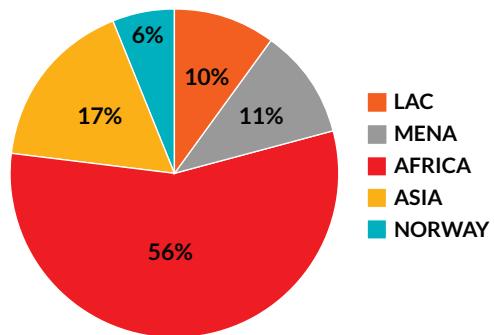
The programme has contributed to the advancement of **gender equality** in the local communities where we work by addressing systemic barriers to equal participation and fostering an environment that is more supportive of the empowerment of women and girls. It has challenged and contributed to change societal norms that limit the rights and opportunities of those facing gender discrimination, focusing on access to education, protection from gender-based violence, including child marriage and teenage pregnancies, and ensuring participation in child clubs and in the communities. In combination with community dialogue and parent support groups, engaging and mentoring female role models and deliberately increasing the number of female teachers, this has led to reduced absenteeism and increased girls' enrolment and retention in school. In one region in **Somalia** girls' enrolment increased by 134%, and for boys by 115%, during the programme period. In **South Sudan, Somalia, Uganda and Malawi**, a number of school-related interventions such as the establishment of girl-friendly spaces, gender segregated latrines, menstrual hygiene management kits and life skills trainings have provided crucial support for girls. Another important achievement across most programmes is the increased involvement of men and boys in activities, proving particularly challenging to engage male caregivers. Subsequently, a number of initiatives have been tested, evaluated and found to be crucial in many different contexts like Malawi, Lebanon and Colombia.

Our work to promote inclusion of **children with disabilities** has over the past 4 years focused on key areas such as awareness raising among programme staff and the communities, building capacity to collect data and generate knowledge, and enabling more children with disabilities into the regular education system. After the pandemic, all implementing countries carried out extensive back to school campaigns to revert the **enrolment and learning losses**, particularly targeting girls and children with disabilities. Since midterm, the enrolment has seen a steady increase in most countries, reaching record-high numbers in some of them, like in **Malawi, Mozambique and Somalia**. Extensive awareness and advocacy campaigns and sensitization of parents and communities are thought to have contributed to the strong increase in enrolment of children with disabilities. Partnering with rights holders, representative Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), as well as the duty bearers through various government entities at different levels, has been key to the programme and its ability to achieve impact and lasting change in the communities and at the national level. The programme collaborated with 10 OPDs or disability specialist organisations throughout the 5-year implementation period. Additionally,

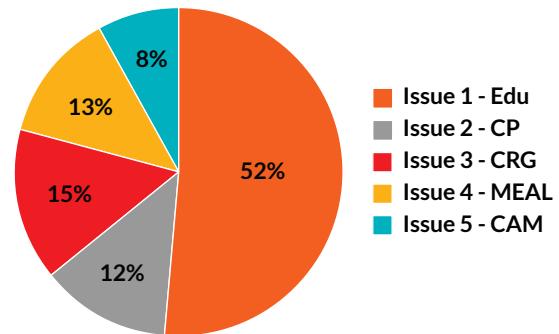
the programme contributed to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in both Somalia and South Sudan, which is an important step towards the fulfilment of rights for persons with disabilities in the two countries.

Key financial figures for the full implementation period 2019-2023

TOTAL PROGRAMME COST PER REGION



DIRECT PROJECT COST BY THEMATIC AREA



The financial report shows that the total executed amount for the framework period 2019-2023 was NOK 1,311,610,000, 89% Norad funds and 11% SCN own contribution (match). 56% of the direct programme funds were implemented in Africa, followed by Asia (16%), Middle East (11%), Latin America (6%) and Norway (6%). Issue 1- Education, accounts for 52% of the direct programme costs, Issue 2- Child Protection 12%; Issue 3- CRG 15%; research monitoring and evaluation (MEAL) 13% and operational costs /CAM (8%). Partner implementation represents 32% of the total direct program costs. For the year 2023, 99% of the budget of NOK261,344,000 was executed.

Reflections on sustainability and learnings

The *Leaving No Child Behind* programme aimed for lasting impacts beyond its duration, focusing on holistic and integrated programmatic approaches that rely strongly on civil society engagement and system strengthening. Recognizing the fragility of education systems, The Quality Learning Framework (QLF) serves as a cornerstone, regularly updated to incorporate new insights and strategies, particularly addressing climate change, Covid-19, and conflict. SC's programming prioritizes lasting impact, employing a socio-ecological framework to prevent and respond to violence against children. By empowering communities and strengthening formal child protection structures, SC ensures sustained advocacy and protection measures beyond program closure. Civil society capacity-building fosters independence, enabling future self-sufficiency in advocating for child rights. Additionally, policy advocacy and legal support contribute to an enabling environment for child protection. Ultimately, SC's initiatives aim to foster resilient education systems, empowered communities, and enduring policy changes to safeguard children's rights beyond the program's lifespan.

Reflecting on the Theory of Change, it's evident that while the framework set a strong direction, there were notable shortcomings. Education efforts were hindered by inadequate remote learning systems during the pandemic, indicating a need for better crisis preparedness. Child protection work revealed that policy advocacy doesn't always lead to swift action, highlighting the necessity for perseverance and sustained efforts. In advancing children's rights, civil society faced challenges due to political and financial instability, pointing to the need for more resilient advocacy strategies. These insights emphasize the importance of adaptability and context-awareness in programme implementation.

Lastly, and most importantly, over the past five years, we made enormous progress and strengthened our work with child participation, as a key element of our theory of change. We see how this way of working serves to strengthen how the children see themselves and their beliefs in what they are capable of; how their sense of belonging and contribution to their community increases, and how they thrive when they experience being met with respect, being valued as individuals and as children. This provides not only hope, but actual capabilities and confidence that they can contribute as agents of change in their own lives and in the lives of the children and adults in their communities. For Save the Children, this impact is invaluable and ultimate proof of the sustainability of our interventions.



| Creating IMPACT | 1. CHILDREN LEARN AND ARE SAFE in a quality learning environment | 2. CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED from violence and abuse | 3. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS are implemented |
|--|---|--|---|
| Realizing OUTCOMES | <p>CHILDREN IN SCHOOL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improved learning outcomes for all boys and girls, including children with disabilities. ■ Boys and girls are safe in their learning environment — ■ Teachers use inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centred pedagogical tools and methodology ■ Strengthened participatory school management supports safe, inclusive quality education ■ Strengthened government systems have policies that deliver safe, inclusive quality education. | <p>CHILDREN IN COMMUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased access to quality education for girls and boys at risk of or affected by child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy. — ■ Transformed social, cultural and gender norms reduce violence against children, including child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy. ■ Strengthened and coordinated national and community-based child protection systems prevent, identify, report and respond to violence against girls and boys. | <p>CHILDREN IN SOCIETY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strengthened civil society including children mobilized to promote children's rights. — ■ Improved accountability of government and other duty bearers of their obligation to monitor and implement children's rights. ■ Strengthened government institutions implement children's rights. |
| Applying STRATEGIES to agents of change | <p> RESEARCH, EVIDENCE AND INNOVATION</p> <p>embedded in a</p> | <p> CHILD CENTRED, RIGHTS APPROACH</p> <p>working with</p> | <p> PARTNERS – AND CHILDREN THEMSELVES</p> <p>to be a fearless</p> <p> VOICE FOR AND OF CHILDREN</p> |
| Addressing PROBLEMS | <p>Teachers lack adequate competencies to support children to learn. Limited awareness on inclusion of Children with Disabilities, results in low enrolment. Schools and communities lack capacity to provide protective environment conducive to children's learning and wellbeing.</p> | <p>Negative social and cultural norms, coupled with conflict and endemic poverty has created a serious protection crisis for girls and boys, particularly vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities and teenage mothers are exposed to violence and rights abuses at school, at home, and in the community.</p> | <p>CSOs lack sufficient capacity to become agents of change. Governments are failing children by not implementing their rights embodied in the UNCRC</p> |

Consolidated assessment of projects effect on society and main lessons learned

1. THEMATIC AREAS

THEORY OF CHANGE ASSESSMENT

Consolidated assessment of projects effect on society and main lessons learned

The Theory of Change (ToC) for Issue 1 envisioned that by fostering inclusive and quality education systems, strides could be made in improving children's learning experiences. The end-of-programme data provides evidence that this vision has been realized, with education systems generally becoming more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all children,

including those with disabilities and girls. The report notes improvements in enrolment and retention rates, suggesting that the barriers to education have been addressed. Initiatives such as the development of home-based learning kits and the adaptation of curricula to local contexts have ensured that education remains accessible even in the face of challenges like the Covid-19 pandemic. The theory of change's assumption that teacher capacity is central to

improving educational outcomes has been confirmed as we see the successful implementation of continuous professional development for teachers. This has led to a more child-centred approach to teaching, which is reflected in the improved literacy and numeracy scores across the programme countries. These educational achievements are an indication of the theory of change's accurate identification of the critical levers for change within the education sector.

The theory of change for Issue 2 speculated that strengthening national and community-based child protection systems would be key in preventing, identifying, reporting, and responding to violence against children. The endline data supports this approach, showing that concerted efforts in child protection have led to actual improvements. For instance, the programme's emphasis on community-based interventions, such as the establishment of Child Welfare Officers and the integration of child protection into school curricula, has contributed to a more robust protective environment for children. Furthermore, the reports from country programmes highlight the success of initiatives aimed at reducing the prevalence of child marriage and teenage pregnancy, which are critical indicators of a society's commitment to protecting its youth. The re-enrolment of girls affected by these issues into educational systems, as documented in Mozambique, Uganda and Malawi, underscores the effectiveness of the ToC's strategic focus on child protection. These results not only reflect a decrease in harmful practices but also an increase in community awareness and a shift towards more protective behaviours and attitudes, supporting the theory of change's premise that empowered and informed communities are essential to safeguarding children's rights and well-being.

Finally, the Theory of Change for Issue 3 centred on the assertion that a strong civil society, including empowered children, is fundamental to the implementation and monitoring of children's rights. The reports from countries validate this assertion, describing how the programmes have successfully mobilised civil society organisations and children to hold governments accountable. Notable achievements include the development and submission of child-led and child-informed supplementary reports to international human rights bodies, which have doubled the number of child rights recommendations. This active engagement has led to concrete policy changes and increased government commitments to children's rights, as shown by the allocation of significant resources to child-focused initiatives and the establishment of child rights committees. The ToC's focus on strengthening civil society's capacity to advocate for child rights has proven to be a driving force behind these advancements. Moreover, the programme's support for child participation has not only fostered a culture of rights but also equipped children with the skills and platforms to voice their concerns and contribute to decision-mak-

ing processes, thereby ensuring that their rights are both protected and promoted.

Reflecting on the Theory of Change, it's evident that while the framework set a strong direction, there were notable shortcomings. Education efforts were hindered by inadequate remote learning systems during the pandemic, indicating a need for better crisis preparedness. Child protection work revealed that policy advocacy doesn't always lead to swift action, highlighting the necessity for perseverance and sustained efforts. In advancing children's rights, civil society faced challenges due to political and financial instability, pointing to the need for more resilient advocacy strategies. These insights emphasize the importance of adaptability and context-awareness in programme implementation.

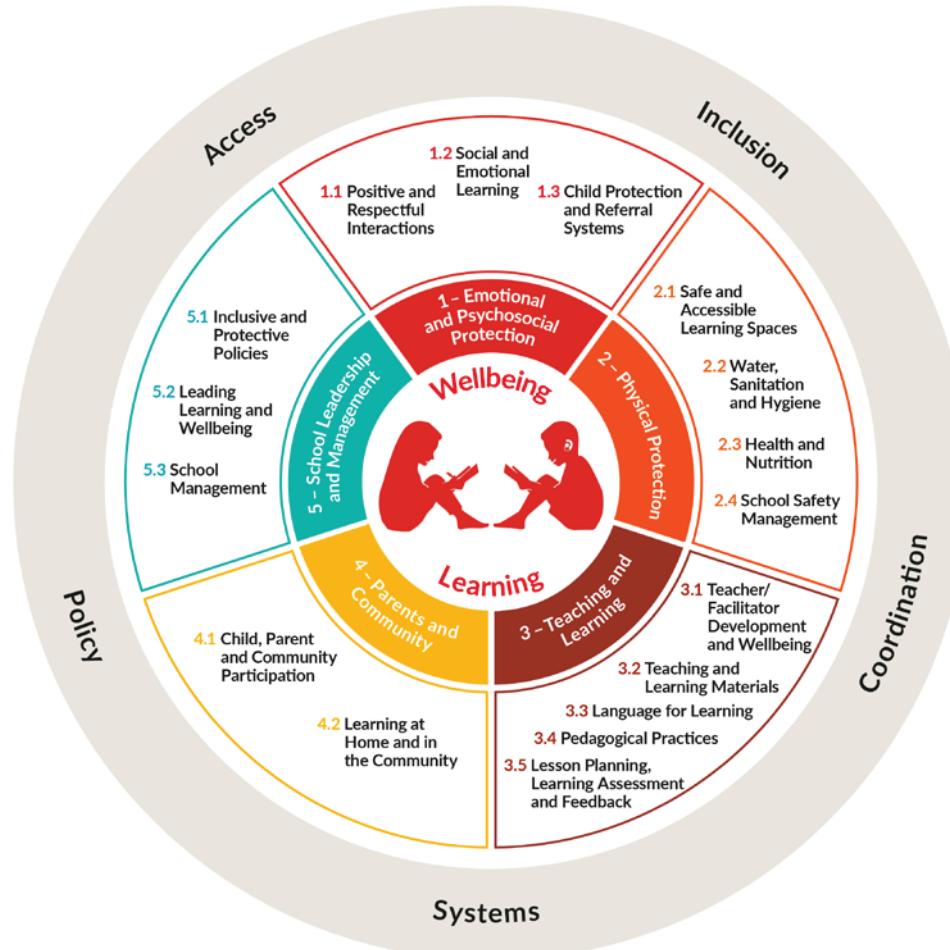


Parent taking her daughter through a lesson that is being aired on radio in Malawi.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

ISSUE 1: CHILDREN LEARN AND ARE SAFE

| 1. CHILDREN LEARN AND ARE SAFE | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| All girls and boys learn and are safe in a quality learning environment | | | | |
| Outcome 1.1: Improved learning outcomes for all boys and girls, including children with disabilities. | Outcome 1.2: Girls and boys are safe in their learning environment. | Outcome 1.3: Teachers use inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centered pedagogical tools and methodology. | Outcome 1.4: Strengthened participatory school management supports safe inclusive quality education. | Outcome 1.5: Strengthened government systems have policies that deliver safe, inclusive quality education. |



Quality Learning Framework

Brief overall assessment of the projects effect on society and main lessons learned.

Issue 1 is dedicated to children's essential right to education, ensuring that every child can access a safe and high-quality educational environment. Our goal is to enhance learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Our approach is comprehensive, adhering to the [Quality Learning Framework](#) (QLF), which encapsulates Save the Children's vision of what constitutes quality education.

The results achieved over the 5 years of the programme within each of the 5 outcome areas, despite all the challenges faced in the programme countries, really goes to show that the holistic education approach of our education programmes has stood the test.

(The *Leaving No Child Behind* programme has been operating against the backdrop of the severe pre-existing learning crisis, which was exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. A [World Bank report](#) states that in 2019, 57% of children in low- and middle-income countries could not read and comprehend a simple

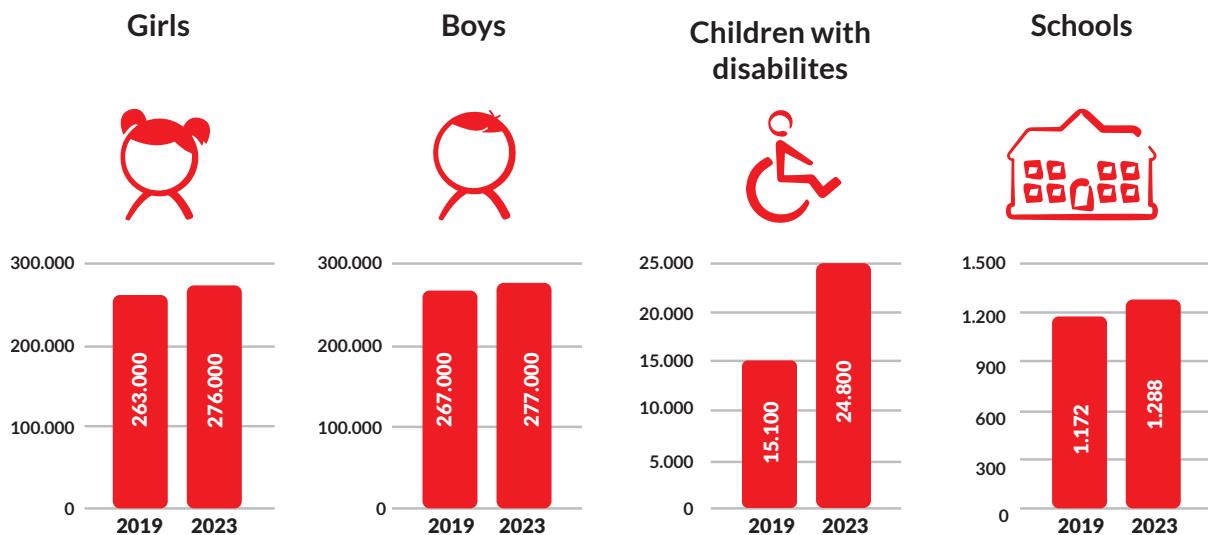
text by age 10; and in Sub-Saharan Africa a staggering 86%. In fact, 'learning poverty' had not improved since 2015. The pandemic has likely worsened the situation, with estimates suggesting a surge to 70% in learning poverty rates, particularly in regions with prolonged school closures like South Asia and Latin America.

Overall, the programmes have been affected by school closures in different degrees which is evident from the results presented below, and we cannot tell what the impact of the programme would have been had the Covid-19 pandemic not disrupted education systems all over.

Having had to adapt all programmes and interventions has however been a critical learning to build on for future programming, and not least how to support government in getting in place resilient and flexible structures that can adapt and mitigate future shocks.

Number of children enrolled in schools reached close to 553 000 (G/B: 50%) in 2023, an increase of 23 000 compared with 2019¹. As such regression in enrolment during COVID-19 has fully been reverted. Similarly, there is an increase in children with dis-

SCHOOL ENROLMENT 2019 AND 2023



The increase in number of schools is primarily due to expansion of the programme in oPt in 2021, and the change in Myanmar from 180 schools in 2019 to 260 community based education sites in 2023. 12 reporting countries.

bilities documented to be in school. In 2019 children with disabilities represented 2,6 % of the school population, in 2023 they were 4,6%. While the disability prevalence in most countries ranges from 1 to 5%, Malawi² (7%) and Lebanon (11%) stand out. One explanation can be that in both countries teachers have been trained on how to identify children in schools, and this is believed to have increased the awareness on disability status among students³.

The focus on ensuring that education is inclusive has been and is a priority in all programme countries, and we have worked on this using different approaches focusing on the child, parents/caretakers, the school environment, teachers and management, the community at large and/or the education authorities and systems.

In 2023 SCN contracted Stone Soup Consulting to conduct an external study of the main barriers in programming for children with disabilities in line with the objectives of the programme⁴. The

study reviewed the programmes in three countries; Guatemala, Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) and Mozambique, and found that the country programmes to various degrees offered trainings and tools at different levels, often targeted at improving learning outcomes, working towards providing a safe learning environment as well as supporting parents. Where the programmes were yet to show clear results were in enrolment of out-of-school children by addressing physical, economic and social barriers hindering access. Recommendations that are taken forward in the new programme *Transforming the Future -for and with children-* (2024-2028) includes increased focus on identifying barriers and to ensure inclusion of children of the most vulnerable groups. We will also be implementing complementary solutions through advocacy and new partnerships and improving existing solutions like increased teacher capacity and strong school-based management and policies.

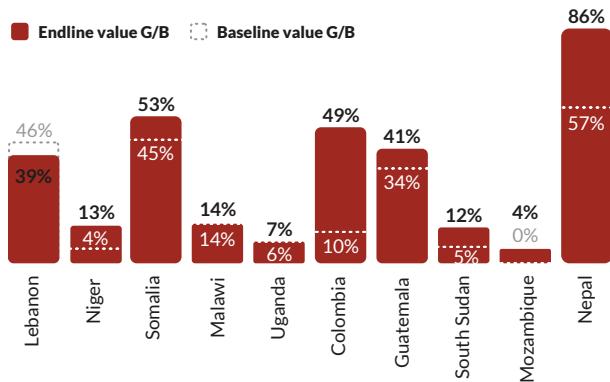
- 1) 12 reporting countries.
- 2) Malawi has by far the largest student-population among the programme countries, constituting close to 40% of all students enrolled in 2023. Hence, their high prevalence of children with disabilities enrolled (7%) largely contributes into the overall weighted average.
- 3) In Malawi the tools developed through the Inclusive Education project (supported by the Norwegian Embassy 2015-18) includes comprehensive training of teachers and school personnel on how to identify and enroll children with diverse needs. In Lebanon teachers were trained on how to use Washington Group Short Set questions to identify children in school
- 4) Stone Soup. 2023. Leaving No Child Behind – A Study of Inclusive Education with a Focus on Disability Inclusion. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

Outcome 1.1: Improved learning outcomes for all girls and boys, including children with disabilities

1.1.1 # and % of children meeting expected proficiency level in early primary grades in literacy⁵, by gender and CWDs

Overall, during the 5 years programme the percentage of children meeting expected proficiency level increased in seven out of ten countries between 2019 and 2023⁶. Six of these have higher progress than 5%-points increase, which means the overall programme met the target of two thirds (8 of 12) of countries to do so. The largest progress is seen in Colombia (+39%-points) and Nepal (+29%-points) while there were minor changes in Uganda and Malawi, and in Lebanon there is a decrease of 7%-points. In Myanmar there was an increase of 23%-points from 2021 to 2023, while oPt⁷ recorded a decrease from 2019 to 2021 of 26%-points. There are no general trends in our results when it comes to gender. We see that the gender gap in results has increased in some countries, at the expense of either boys or girls, and decreased in some countries.

% CHILDREN MEETING MINIMUM PROFICIENCY LEVEL IN LITERACY



It is important to notice that achievement levels are not comparable between countries, as the tests and thresholds are different to suit the country contexts and expected proficiency level in-country.

For decades SC has focused on children's right to learn foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Through programming adapted from the documented approaches Literacy and Numeracy Boost, children have a greater chance of success in school and later life. Literacy programming supports students, teachers, parents, and communities to develop literacy skills in the early years of primary school, both inside and outside of the classroom. It adapts to the local curricular context and works with and through the regular teachers and supporting them with strengthening their pedagogical approaches, knowledge and understanding of promoting and teaching the core skills of literacy acquisition⁸. In 2023, SC engaged a research team to review its literacy programming. [The recommendations from this review](#) connect well with the adaptations seen in many of the *Leaving No Child Behind* programmes, linking with the continuous teacher professional development programming, stronger focus on adjusting to individual needs, contexts, curriculum and pre-service teacher training. It also calls for more community support, a stronger focus on equity and inclusion (such as minority language groups, struggling learners, children with disabilities) and alternative support through Literacy Clubs, Catch-up Clubs and parent/volunteer support. Lastly, it is important not to underestimate the importance of social behaviour change and the support of educational technology to further support engagement around literacy activities.

The challenges that children have met in their pursuit of education during these 5 years have been manyfold. For most of the children the prolonged school closures during the Covid-19 pandemic were poignant. A 1-3rd grader that started schooling in 2019-20 was suddenly not able or allowed to go to school and resumed in a higher grade in 2021/22 just because they got older. Some countries like Colombia and Nepal were able to maintain a certain level of learning in this period, through distance learning or home support, so the children did not completely miss out on education, and also provide support to children to catch up on their learning loss when schools reopened⁹. For other children this was not the case and a 3rd - 4th grader who participated in the supported activities in 2023 might not have had full support in their learning in their first year of schooling and therefore were lagging behind. There

- 5) The majority of countries document literacy in grade 2 or 3. Exceptions are Colombia (grade 1), Malawi (grade 4) and Lebanon (BLN/ mixed).
- 6) 10 of 12 reporting countries have comparable data from baseline (2019) to endline (2023), and hence only these 10 are included for aggregation towards set targets. The two countries which are not included are Myanmar (comparable data only from 2021 to 2023 due to changed implementation and tools), and Palestine (which reports from 2019 to 2021, as it was not feasible to collect endline in 2023).
- 7) Endline was not carried out due to the school closure followed by the war in Gaza.
- 8) Alphabet knowledge, Phonological awareness, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Fluency and Writing.
- 9) <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/unicef-calls-averting-lost-generation-covid-19-threatens-cause-irreversible-harm>



Girl at school in Somalia

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

is a high risk that the children who lost educational opportunities during the pandemic will not be supported further as the years go by and the situation 'goes back to normal'¹⁰.

Integrated programming where teaching and learning activities support building literacy skills can be seen widely in the *Leaving No Child Behind* programmes, although the country context has influenced the approach taken and the considerations or opportunities for adaptation during Covid-19. In **Nepal** the programme has had incredible results in improving the learning outcomes of children measured in grade 3 using the National Assessment of Reading and Numeracy (NARN) tool. The tool assesses children's skills in both reading and math. Minimum reading proficiency among the children has increased from 57% to 86%, while numeracy score has increased from 30% to 94%, which is a notable improvement. Girls performed slightly better than boys in both domains.

In **Colombia**, foundational skills among children in grade 1 improved from 10% to 49% at the end of the programme, despite prolonged pandemic-related school closures. This leap in learning outcomes was due to curriculum updates, teacher training with practical classroom strategies, quality learning mate-

rials, and caregiver support with play-based literacy and numeracy methods. The success also hinged on working at all levels of the socio-ecological model (children, teachers, parents, and authorities, incl systems). Partnerships with organizations like Fundación Saldarriaga Concha (Disability inclusion specialist organisation), enhanced inclusive education practices, while collaboration with Corpoeducación (education specialist organisation) aligned curriculums with national literacy and numeracy standards. Additionally, the programme leveraged digital tools for inclusive education and bolstered student preparation for national exams through competency-based assessment training for teachers.

The programme in **Somalia** also saw an increase in children's learning outcomes where the minimum proficiency rose from 45% at baseline to 53% at endline. While this appears to be only an increase of 9 %- points, it is incredibly significant since the mid-line evaluation found only 34% of children reaching minimum proficiency. This can therefore be seen as an improvement of 19 %- points in only 2 years! Enabling Teachers¹¹ was adopted based on the significant slump in literacy rates, and Literacy and Numeracy boost methodologies were doubled down on. Literacy and numeracy improvement plans were

10) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10036080/#bib29>

11) Enabling Teachers is a new SCi common programming approach to support teachers in their pedagogical practice. Read more on this under outcome 1.3.



Reading Club- Community-Based Education activity, Myanmar

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

also incorporated into existing school improvement plans. These plans involved the active participation of child clubs, community education committees, and school management.

In **Mozambique**, literacy improvements were noted as the percentage of children reading fluently rose from 9% to 11%, and those with listening comprehension soared from 9% to 32%. Literacy and numeracy combined; literate children increased from 0% to 4%. Despite a drop in numeracy proficiency from 24% to 8%, fewer children struggled with basic addition and subtraction. These gains, although modest, are also significant against a backdrop where less than 10% of children master basic skills, are credited to integrated community actions promoting inclusive education, overcoming barriers to education access, reducing teacher and student absenteeism, enhancing teacher and school manager training, creating literacy support spaces like reading camps, training educators to foster basic skills, strengthening partner's capacities including the Ministry of Education for quality inclusive education, and implementing safe school practices with risk-informed plans for disaster mitigation.

The challenging and changing situation in **Myanmar** called for a programme switch from Home-based Learning (HBL) during the pandemic and the first period of the political crisis, to a Community-based Education (CBE) adapted approach, including Learn-

ing and Wellbeing in Emergencies, reading clubs and Catch Up Clubs focusing on Literacy, to continue supporting struggling learners to catch up and improve their social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies. The program also developed kits for community-based education, including learning materials for literacy and numeracy and guide-books for volunteers. With the community-based approach, children's learning outcomes increased significantly in literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning scores (23 %-points increase between 2021 and 2023) due to the focus on literacy, numeracy, and SEL activities and that activities were implemented in more child-friendly and play-based manner than in formal schools.

The endline results from **Malawi** show that the programme maintained **reading proficiency level** of grade 4 students at 14% as at baseline, however it declined from the midterm value of 21%. The programme registered a learning loss or stagnation on reading proficiency levels though a significant increase in numeracy (from 9% to 52%). The reasons can be manyfold and linked to prolonged school and learning camp closures because of Covid-19, teacher strikes and natural disasters. The increase in results at mid-term can be attributed to adapted learning activities, including remediation, provision of literacy enhancement learning materials for the learners to use outside the normal classroom. Other

contributing factors include the teachers coaching and mentorship on the teaching of literacy and numeracy by Centre Coordinating tutors (CCTs) and the rollout out of the abridged curriculum that aimed at addressing the learning losses due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Children in **Uganda** were among those who lost most schooling days due to Covid-19 measures, with more than 1.5 school years lost due to school closures. The endline result witness a single percent increase from 4% at BL and 5% at EL. Girls performance were far below that of boys throughout. As an example, the 'Literacy in English' UWEZO data shows that 42% (B:34%/ G51%) of learners were rated as non-readers, 36% (B:38%/G:34%) could only identify letters of the alphabet and only 5% (B:8%/G:2%) could read and comprehend a Primary-2 story. Proficiency in local language was equally below the desired performance level, with 40% of learners rated as non-readers, 36% reading at word level and only 7% with comprehension. Boys performed better than girls, with a 5 % -point difference both at baseline and endline.

Despite the challenging conditions during the pandemic and the political, social, and environmental factors that affected the education sector in **Guatemala**, the students' performance level in the reading test increased from 34% (G:36%; B: 33%) to 41% (G: 46%; B: 36%), showing a 7%-points improvement. The programme implements a multi-phased approach supporting the roll out of the bi-lingual curriculum with provision of additional teaching and learning materials, enhanced community participation in education, awareness creation and sharing student performance data on an annual basis to analyse results and engage with parents, teachers and leaders.

The non-formal education support programme in **Lebanon** focused on Remedial Support and Basic Literacy and Numeracy to ensure (re)integration in regular schools. At the end-line, students at the end of both the remedial support schoolyear and the Basic literacy and numeracy cycle were sampled to conduct the ASER test. The results showed a decrease from 46% to 39% (G: 43%, M: 35%) of children succeeding in meeting expected proficiency level in grade 2 in literacy mainly due to prolonged school closures and teacher strikes severely affecting learning outcomes. In oPt the programme also supported Remedial Education following school closures and teacher strikes. Due to the current situation the endline was not conducted. The situation will call for a joint massive restauration of the entire education system not only in Gaza but across oPt, and a return to learning force with alternative pathways meeting the varied needs of children.

Improved learning outcomes with a focus on Children with Disabilities: At endline: In Lebanon and Uganda, the share of children with disabilities meeting the threshold is higher than their peers,

with 5%-points and 3%-points respectively. On the other side, in Malawi, South Sudan and Nepal the share is lower, with 11%-point, 12%-points and 16%-points respectively.

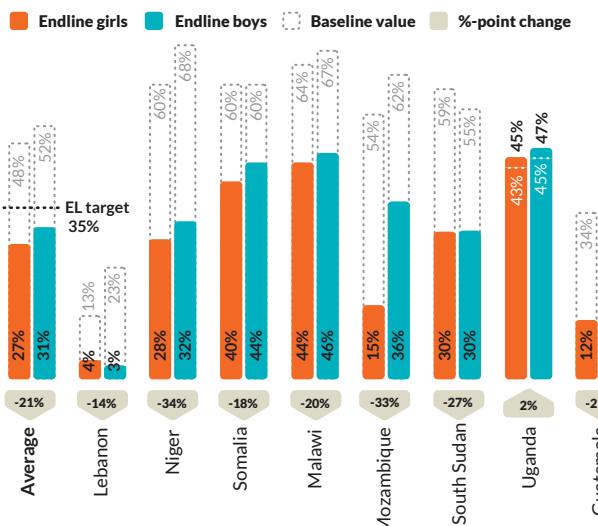
Outcome 1.2: Girls and boys are safe in their learning environment

1.2.1: % children currently attending school who have been physically punished by a teacher during the last 12 months

Overall, there is a reduction of 21%-points of children who have been physically hit by a teacher from 50% (G:48%; B: 52%) at baseline to 29% (G:27%; B:31%) at endline, surpassing the original endline target of 35%. The reduction has been equal for girls and boys, and at endline the gender difference from baseline remains, 4%-point fewer girls than boys experience physical punishment from the teachers.

All reporting countries see a reduction, except Uganda (2%-point increase), with Niger, Mozambique and South Sudan seeing the largest reduction (with 34, 33 and 27 %-points respectively). Lebanon and Guatemala document the lowest levels of punishment at endline, with 4% (G: 4%; B: 3%), and 13% (G: 12%; B: 14%). At the other end high levels are still seen in Uganda (46% (G: 45%; B: 46%)), Malawi (45% (G: 44%; B 46%)) and Somalia (42% (G: 40%; B:44%)).

% CHILDREN CURRENTLY ATTENDING SCHOOL WHO HAVE BEEN PHYSICALLY PUNISHED BY A TEACHER DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS



With a gender lens, Lebanon closed the gender gap with 10%-point more for boys at BL and 1%-point (or equal) with girls at EL. In Mozambique we witnessed a large reduction for girls with 29%-

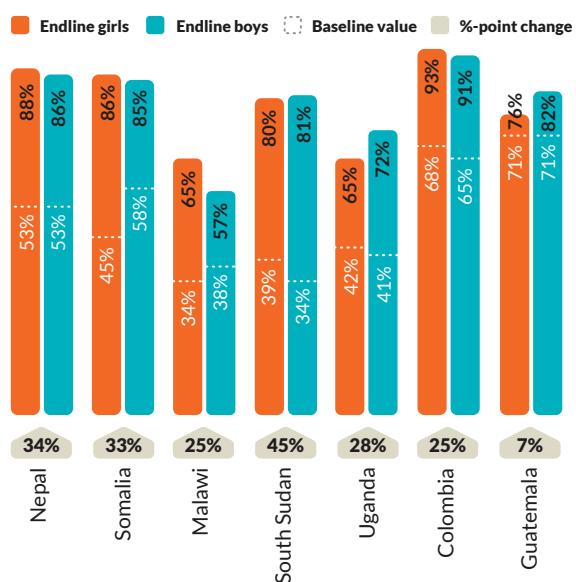
point reduction, however we saw a gender gap at EL with boys being more than twice as exposed (21%-points higher) than girls.

From the 3 countries that had representative data for children with disabilities in 2023, in South Sudan and Uganda the share of children with disabilities that experienced physical punishment were lower than for their peers, with 31%-point and 9%-points respectively. On the other hand, in Somalia 16%-points more children with disabilities compared with their peers, experienced punishment.

1.2.2. % of children feeling safe and well in school

In all 8 reporting countries more children reported to feel safe and well within the school in 2023 compared to 2019. 6 of the 8 countries report a progress above 20%-points, surpassing the programme target of half of reporting countries to do so. The largest progress is seen in South Sudan (+45%-points), followed by Nepal and Somalia (+34%-points). At the other end, in Guatemala there is an increase of 7%-points of children feeling safe and well in schools. Niger reports an increase from 7,6 to 8,3 on a 10-points wellbeing index.

% OF CHILDREN WHO REPORT TO FEEL WELL AND/ OR SAFE WITHIN THE SCHOOL



For both Myanmar and oPt moderate positive trends were seen for their evaluation points, an increase of 4%-points (G: 6%-points; B: 1%-points) in oPt from 2019 to 2021, and 3%-points increase (G: 5%-points; B: 2%-points) from 2021 to 2023 in Myanmar.

In **Guatemala**, educational communities were strengthened to apply security and protection strategies to mitigate violence, threats, and risks caused by natural or man-made phenomena. Safe

and protected learning environments for children were fostered through advocacy and collaboration between guarantor institutions and local organizations. Whereas in **Colombia**, SC intervention has facilitated effective conflict resolution techniques employed by teachers and counsellors, resulting in decreased school conflicts. The noticeable positive change in children reporting feeling good is attributed to the shift in the dynamic between children and teachers. Teachers have refined their communication skills, become active listeners, empathize with children's emotions, and become positive role models.

In **Uganda**, the results show a remarkable increase of children feeling safe in schools from 41% (G: 42%; B: 41%) at BL to 69% (G: 65%; B: 72%) at EL. The intervention by SC focused on raising awareness in schools, and mapping the hazards and vulnerabilities showed the need for school risk mitigation plans to ensure the protection and safety of children. Also, the children knowledge and skills attained on natural/man-made hazards and violence increased to the double from 41% (G: 42%; B: 43%) at base line to 80% (G: 74%; B: 67%) at endline. Gaining such skills and knowledge helps children to feel safer and more capacitated to deal with the various hazards they may encounter that may jeopardize their safety. However, while children reported feeling safer at schools in Uganda, and despite focus on training of teachers on the code of conduct, there was a slight increase in children reporting corporal punishment from teachers from 44% (G: 43%; B: 45%) to 46% (G: 45%; B: 47%).

In **Mozambique**, interventions in Safe Schools Programming focused on ensuring more protective learning-friendly environment for children. Securing a safe and conducive learning environment for the children was essential through interventions connected to empowerment and resilience and supporting teachers and other members of the school community to use different strategies that motivate safe learning. A higher focus was placed on reintegration of children in schools, especially for girls, protecting them from early marriage and early pregnancy. These strategies contributed significantly to overachieving the goal of 98% of the planned 90% of schools with emotional and psychological protection standards in place, which when compared to the baseline (19%) is an increase of 79%-points which is remarkable and gives evidence of the success of the Safe Schools intervention.

Whereas in **South Sudan** the noticeable change in feeling safe and well in school can be linked to the capacity building for teachers on positive discipline, following the school Code of Conduct, renovations of classrooms and advocating and supporting the government in developing and launching the Safe Schools Declaration Guidelines in 2021. In addition, the State Level Governments and Government Ministries were active and engaged in enforcing the laws



Comprehensive school safety framework - revised action pack.

to ensure a conducive learning environment for children free from attacks on education.

During the 5-year framework agreement period, SC introduced the Safe Schools Common Approach in 2019 which is a comprehensive framework with an all-hazards approach ensuring that children are safe, protected, and can learn. The work around ensuring the safety of children in and around schools is closely linked to ensuring children are safe in their communities, which we report more on below under Issue 2.

In 2023, SC engaged in reviewing our Safe Schools common approach, which is a comprehensive framework with an all-hazards approach ensuring that children are safe, protected, and can learn in both Humanitarian and Development contexts (more on this under issue 2). Based on implementation, research and evidence, and learnings from the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme, have been important in the review process. A revised version of the approach was launched in May 2023, with an even stronger climate focus, among other changes. This approach is aligned to the Comprehensive school safety framework (see figure above for the full revised action pack).

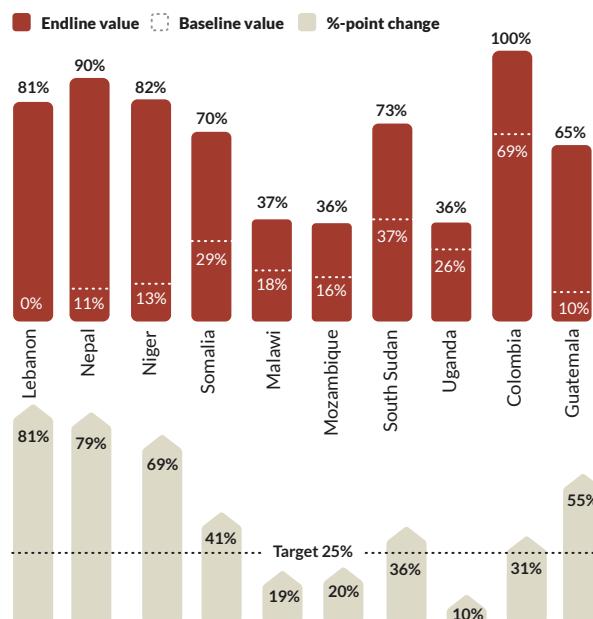
Outcome 1.3: Teachers use inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centred pedagogical tools and methodology

of countries showing a progression in % of teachers who demonstrate professional teaching practices

Progress in teachers demonstrating professional teaching practices have increased from 2019 to 2023 in all 10 reporting countries. Seven of them (3/4)

increased with more than 25%-points, meaning the programme as such surpassed the endline target of 3/5 (7 of 12) to do so. Largest progress is seen in Lebanon (+81%-point), Nepal (+79%-point) and Niger (+69%-point), while a slower progress is seen in Uganda (+10%-points), Malawi (+19%-points) and Mozambique (+20%-points). Also oPt documented a positive trend with 33%-point increase in teachers' performance from 2019 to 2021, and in Myanmar the facilitators sustained a high level of scoring 90% in their evaluations from 2021 to 2023. However, there was a lower score on some pedagogical skills linked to classroom management and disability inclusion,

% OF TEACHERS WHO DEMONSTRATE PROFESSIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES



showing the need for providing additional capacity development support in these two specific areas.

During the 5-year framework agreement period, SC introduced a new common approach to working with teachers titled Enabling Teachers. This approach provides a framework that supports teachers with two main components: 1) a Teacher Professional Development (TPD) course designed to respond to teachers' individual learning needs and context, using competencies aligned to a recognized framework, and 2) an enabling environment that ensures teachers are supported to succeed in their roles. As a result, all the *Leaving no child behind* programme countries adopted the more comprehensive design of TPD training activities combining a series of expert-led training workshops in cycles with on-going coaching, classroom observations, and peer learning through learning circles. The SC TPD approach aligns with the Norad's Strategic Guidance Note on Teachers (2021) and the UNESCO teacher policy development guidelines, especially in its emphasis on strengthening teacher education systems and advocacy for policy improvement.

During the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme period more than 15 500 educational personnel have been trained in the 12 programme countries. Close to 10 000 teachers (F: 47%; M: 53%), more than 2 000 ministry of education staff (F: 51%; M: 49%), and close to 3 500 education facilitators and volunteers (F: 68%; M: 32%).

Among the 12 programming countries, five countries – South Sudan, Mozambique, Malawi, Somalia, and Uganda - are currently developing or in the process of implementing teacher policy reforms, and SC offices have been able to support these reforms through the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme and active participation in Local Education Groups. **SC Malawi** supported the Directorate of Teacher Education (DTED) in the development of a National Teacher Competency Framework, and SC will continue to support DTED in orientation of teachers on the framework and how to access national online Continuous Professional Development (CPD) platforms. SC has also worked with the MoE in producing 4 modules on inclusive pedagogy, reading fluency and child-centered teaching practices. The 2024-28 programme will build on these modules in delivering TPD to early grade teachers, including working with the government to strengthen incorporation of inclusive education in the national teacher education curriculum and to develop a more comprehensive teacher mentorship model. In **Mozambique**, a new Teacher Policy (2023- 2032) was approved in 2022, and the next step is to develop a teacher competency framework. The National Qualification Framework for Teachers is in draft form, and SC is participating and leading some sub-groups of the development. TPD provided to teachers includes training on literacy and numeracy instruction, child-centred pedagogy, inclusive teaching methods,

multilingual teaching, and gender equality. The TPD model focuses on the application of teachers' training in the classroom through mentoring support, use of teacher champions, and peer-to-peer support and community of practice to exchange insights, boost motivation, and improve wellbeing among teachers.

The TPD provided to teachers under the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme in **South Sudan** is a combination of supporting the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI) in rolling out teacher training on the new Basic Education competency-based curriculum and additional SC modules in literacy, numeracy, and social emotional learning. An important part of the delivery is MoGEI, with support of SC, conducting regular monitoring and mentorship of teachers at school level. The **Uganda** TPD programme uses the government established system for in-service teacher training with the Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs) at the Primary Teacher Colleges, being trained as Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) for training of teachers at programme schools. This builds the capacity of the in-service teacher training system beyond the programme schools both short and long-term. SC is engaging with the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education (UNITE) for approval of the TPD modules as part of the National Continuous Professional Development framework. In addition, by supporting recruitment and upgrade of community teachers, the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme is making a critical contribution to the development of a diverse teaching force, and the government's effort to absorb non-formal teachers, that is better able to meet the needs of children locally. At national level, SC is also effectively participated in the development of the National Inclusive Education Policy by bringing on board learning and its experience from implementation of its inclusive education approach.

The programme period saw an increase in the use of **Education Technology** in support to teachers across several countries. In **Colombia**, SC played an important role in forming partnerships with higher education and teacher training institutions, such as the *Escuela Normal Superior* and the *Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander*, to be able to continue education provision by equipping teachers with skills to be able to teach on digital platforms. This was overwhelming for many teachers as they not only needed to use online platforms but also use them in an engaging way so they could provide a meaningful learning experience for children. Thus, the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme not only contributed to continuity of education but also to the strengthening of the resilience of the education system for future shocks. In **Somalia**, the use of WhatsApp groups was instrumental in better supporting teachers and ensuring that they had regular interactions with coaches and their peers. WhatsApp Teacher Learning Circles were initially a Covid-19 adaptation but have now become the norm due to their impact and

cost effectiveness. As part of the TPD self-learning materials for teachers in **Nepal**, the programme developed ten short videos related to literacy and numeracy instruction and widely disseminated them to teachers using the Virtual Community of Practice (VCoP) platform.

All countries saw improvement in the levels of teachers' professional teaching practices during the programme period. The results are attributed to the introduction of the more comprehensive approach to Teacher Professional Development (TPD) with mentoring, peer learning in Teacher Learning Circles (TLCs), and integrated self-directed learning. For example, in **Nepal**, an increase in teacher competencies from 11% at baseline to 90% point at the endline was observed in areas linked to preparation for teaching, practicing non-discriminatory teaching learning processes, demonstrating pedagogical skills, classroom management and student assessment. In the **Niger** programme, teachers' confidence in selected competencies increased from 13% to 82% at endline. According to school principals, inspectors and local education authorities, many changes have been observed following the implementation of the TPD. These changes concern the professionalization of teachers, the creation of a literate environment in schools, the improvement of teacher-teacher, teacher-student and teacher-pedagogical advisor interaction, exchanging/learning between schools, including schools that are not supported by the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme, respect for the rules of discipline through the establishment of a code of conduct, etc. The actors and partners involved in the implementation of the new TPD approach stressed that they appreciated this innovation. The teachers also confirmed the added value of the TPD explaining that this approach was better than the traditional approach which consists of bringing together teachers in large numbers for several days; self-directed activities provide opportunities for empowerment and the learning circle is a supportive setting for giving and receiving advice. The children say, for their part, that with TPD, teachers are much more respectful of children and that their teachers' ability to manage students with learning difficulties has improved.

It is encouraging to see the progress in increased awareness and skills on **inclusive education**, especially inclusion of children with disabilities. In **oPt, South Sudan, Malawi, and Uganda**, SC implemented teacher capacity development using the Student Needs Action Pack (SNAP) tool to provide teachers with knowledge and skills in supporting learners with different special needs, as well as supporting the national efforts of integrating inclusive education content in teacher training. For example, close collaboration with UNRWA and the MoE in oPt led to a strengthening of an Inclusive Education focus in formal and UNRWA schools with capacity building of teachers as well as provision of assistive devices for

children. In **Malawi**, the programme saw an increase in the performance of children with disabilities in Grade 4 in both reading and numeracy proficiency levels from midterm to endline. This change is attributed to the TPD programme being introduced with its on-going teacher mentorship support and focus on inclusive pedagogy and reading fluency, which helped strengthen teacher capacities to effectively support children with disabilities. Teachers in the **Guatemala** programme were found to have increased their teaching skills targeting inclusive strategies for addressing children with disabilities in the classroom from 10% at baseline to 94% at endline. The TPD component here focused on bilingual teaching skills of teachers, Safe Schools, and socio-emotional learning. The training of bilingual teachers has been successfully supported in Jocotán and the Ixil Region through the implementation by coordinated actions with partners and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), and the course and materials have been certified by the MINEDUC, which will be implementing them in schools beyond the project coverage.

The new SC TPD approach would need to be implemented over a longer period for improvements in teachers' capacity to be translated into students' learning outcomes. However, encouraging results are emerging across several countries. In **South Sudan**, the program saw promising results on students' learning achievement assessment, with the percentage of Grade 3 students not being able to recognize a letter reduced from 22% to 3% and the percentage of students who are able to read at word and paragraph significantly increased. This indicates that the MoGEI led Teacher Professional Development (TPD) programme delivered to teachers in the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme is working, with learning taking place. The TPD model combined with updating local curriculum with SC Literacy and Numeracy Boost content in **Colombia** contributed to a significant result in students' literacy and numeracy outcomes from 10% at baseline to 49% at endline.

Challenges to address in the continuation of TPD programming include low levels of teachers' motivation, attendance and retention, and teachers' attitudes related to the use of corporal punishment.

Outcome 1.4: Strengthened participatory school management supports safe, inclusive quality education

1.4.1 # and % of schools with functional risk-informed school improvement plans in place

In 2019 we developed a monitoring tool to show progress related to risk assessment, safety measures and use of school improvement plans, and to identify



Children express themselves through drawings in Malawi.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

areas for improvement at school level. The tool has been administered during the 5 years mainly at BL, MT and EL with various level of success. We have experienced challenges with the data storage and maintenance hub, so an aggregation of the data is at this point not possible. Results below are based on country offices' own monitoring and additional indicators.

Most schools are required to develop a School Improvement Plan to lay out the vision and goals for the school, as well as yearly (timebound) actions to improve the teaching and learning environment based on a variety of criteria, often set by the government. Save the Children highlights the importance of the school improvement plan being informed by data gathered from students, teachers, parents and communities and including a risk and vulnerability assessment. The school governing body lead the School Improvement process and in **Colombia**, **Mozambique** and **Malawi**, the work on the school improvement plan has engaged the whole school community and allowed them to work on issues such as gender equality, inclusion and child protection in addition to maintaining the physical environment (school grounds, play area, WASH and school feeding among other) and the school's resources.

In **Malawi**, despite data collection challenges, there has been progress in school improvement planning. The data indicates that while more schools

are adopting these plans, nearly half are not engaging students, teachers, and school committees effectively. Decision-making and monitoring is more frequently done by school management committees and parent-teacher associations than by students or teachers. Moreover, less than 20% of actions requiring additional resources were adequately funded, impacting the effectiveness of these plans. The growth in functional plans is linked to the programme's efforts in engaging stakeholders, including teachers and students, in enhancing the school environment through activities like safe space mapping.

At a varied level the plans also include safety, risk and hazard management to ensure a comprehensive school improvement planning. Of the 14 schools in **Colombia** only 3 had plans based on risk assessment at BL but at EL this had gone up to 8 schools (57%), and an increased number of schools had implemented direct actions to address the risks and had allocated budget for these actions. This success is attributable to several factors including the genuine interest of communities to improve conditions for children, recognizing that they are impacted disproportionately, the concerns around the current conditions of schools and the strong community acceptance of Save the Children.

Establishing and further supporting the capacity of the various Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) committees is at the core of the Safe Schools work that

influences school management. All of the 12 countries supported participatory safety management and improvement processes. Overall close to 12 000 SMC members (M: 51% / F: 49%) participated in trainings during the five years in these countries. The school management with the DRR committees participate in risk assessment, development of improvement plans, carried out improvements and activities in and around school as well as working with the local community leaders.

During the framework agreement 2015-18 SC **Mozambique** supported the MoE in developing a District Supervision manual that outlines a known set of quality assurance standards for ensuring quality, equity and efficiency of education. The manual is used by the district level as well as the schools themselves. The EL evaluation shows that the % of schools implementing activities as guided by the supervision manual increased from 15% to 61% at MT and 95% at EL. This result is mainly due to the constitution and training of district supervision teams in both school supervision and pedagogical supervision.

In addition, SC in **Mozambique** successfully trained Community Child Protection Committees (CCPC) on safe schools but there was a need to provide additional training to 61 CCPC because the initially delivered training was insufficient to achieve the overall objective of building capacity and to draft a mitigation and response plan for emergency. After the training, the trainees were still unable to develop the plans. Thus, 61 School Committees for Managing Risks and disasters (CEGRD) were constituted and trained, including in the issues of preparing Basic School Emergency Plan (PEBE). The Safe Schools Programming requires a consistent follow-up plan led by the School Emergency Committees in coordination with the School Councils that involves teachers and students in addition to the community. Thus, after the MTR, considering the challenges identified, measures were taken to ensure that the Safe Schools Programming covered more than the 61 schools identified as disaster prone.

The strengthening of participatory school management and community engagement in emergencies and fragile contexts has been supported through the implementation of the Improving Learning Environment Together¹² pack (ILET). The programmes in **Niger** and **South Sudan** are using the ILET tool to assess, develop, implement and evaluate the implementation of school improvement plans. In South Sudan the results shows that 50% of the schools reflect a good performance across the quality learning environment standards, while in Niger 59% achieved the expected threshold. Given the operational contexts it is challenging to reach

a satisfactory level given the scarcity of resources available, as many schools operate with classrooms in straw huts and lack desks, chairs, black boards and learning materials.

School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot

The School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Project was initiated in 2019 in Nepal to address critical gaps in educational leadership within rural school settings. This innovative project focused on Foundation 5 of Save the Children's Quality Learning Framework, which emphasizes enhancing school leadership and management. The project aimed to build a programme approach and model for improving school leadership that can be taken to scale. The interventions focus on strengthening school leadership capacities that foster improvement in the learning environment and educational outcomes, and the interventions were developed and refined along the way applying a Developmental Evaluation approach which allowed for a contextually-relevant project model to be developed through a participatory methodology with local education stakeholders including head teacher, teacher, school management committees, education officials, and community members.

The SLaM model was developed, tested and implemented in close collaboration with 14 schools in Dailekh municipality in the Karnali region, over the course of 4 years, and the interventions were scaled up to 91 schools within the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme in 2023. An evidence review¹³ was completed by an external consultant in 2024 with the following conclusion: 'The SLaM Pilot Project demonstrates a successful model for improving school leadership and management through a localized, principle-driven approach. Its achievements provide a strong foundation for expanding the model to other regions, offering significant potential for enhancing educational quality and outcomes across diverse settings'.

The SLaM interventions led to significant improvements in school leadership and management:

- **Educational Outcomes:** Schools in the SLaM program showed marked improvements in student performance metrics, particularly in reading and mathematics, compared to non-SLaM schools.
- **Accountability:** There was a notable enhancement in how schools managed performance assessment and improvement planning. School leaders became more accountable to their communities, regularly engaging stakeholders in the evaluation of school progress and needs.

12) <https://ilet.savethechildren.net/>

13) Informed International. 2024. School Leadership and Management (SLAM) Pilot Evidence Review. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

- Transparency: Increased clarity in roles and responsibilities, coupled with better communication of school plans and achievements, fostered a more transparent environment. Schools implemented more structured and communicative strategies, ensuring that school improvement plans were both understood and relevant to community needs.
- Participation: The project significantly boosted community and parental engagement in school governance, evidenced by more active involvement in school assessments and decision-making processes. This was supported by enhanced training and capacity building initiatives that empowered stakeholders to contribute effectively.

A key lesson learnt from the pilot was the Principle-Based Approach. Adopting locally developed principles for effective school leadership and management to guide program design and implementation was critical in ensuring relevance and sustainability. These principles facilitated a shared vision and consistent practices which were culturally and contextually appropriate and internalized by stakeholders.

Outcome 1.5: Strengthened government systems have policies that deliver safe, inclusive quality education

1.5.1. # of educational policies and plans developed and/or revised, including policies on inclusive education, with support by SC, by type of policy and level (national and/or sub-national)

With the revised Quality Learning Framework, Save the children is even further emphasising the importance of policy, systems, and coordination as vital enablers to ensure quality education. Through integration of advocacy and communication, SC put forward and supported the development of new policies and guidelines as well as ensuring that gaps are filled.

In total in the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme, 21 governmental documents have been developed or adapted with the support from SC during the five years of implementation (6 policies, 13 strategies and plans, and 2 procedures; 4 at national level, 17 at sub-national level), surpassing the target of 17 documents. These are general education policies/strategies (10), early childhood policies (3), and policy and plans on inclusive education (4) and safe schools (4).

SC has supported Inclusive education policy development in **Mozambique, Uganda and Somalia**

in the reporting period, at national (Mozambique, Uganda) and sub-national levels (Somalia/ Puntland). This shows a clear linkage between the *Leaving No Child Behind* and the Together for Inclusion programmes and the particular focus on strengthening the overall push related to Inclusive Education from the school to the policy level.

Advocacy takes place in many forms and shapes, such as through engagement and public mobilisation where the regular programme work provides best practices; through awareness raising and campaigning by and with children, and through direct shaping of policies or guidelines. Service delivery, capacity building and advocacy will naturally go hand in hand throughout a programme's cycle.

Ensuring active and meaningful participation of children in education takes many shapes and forms and often within the classroom in the interaction with the teacher. At the school governing side child participation through Student or Learner Councils formalizes the participation and children themselves takes active part in shaping their education. In **Malawi**, SC supported the Ministry in the development of the new Learners' Council guidelines and its launch in 2022. This helped institutionalize child participation in primary schools.

In relation to the implementation of Safe and Inclusive Schools in **Colombia**, at the end of 2022 the new Colombian government became the 116th country to adhere to the Declaration on Safe Schools, which seeks the protection of students, teachers, and schools in contexts of armed conflict. This was a joint effort, but SC advocacy was very strong on this also demonstrating the impact of programmes with a Safe schools' approach such as *Leaving No Child Behind*.

In 2021, **South Sudan** with the support of SC, developed and launched the Safe Schools Declaration Guidelines, following the endorsement of the Safe School Declaration in 2015. SC engaged with government ministries, inclusive of the national defence force in the contextualization of the guidelines, approval, and launching of the South Sudan Safe Schools Declaration Guidelines¹⁴ with Government, implementing partners, teachers, and PTAs. In terms of immediate concrete results, in December 2021, the program successfully managed to establish a Civil-Military Monitoring Committee in Rumbek constituting Government departments such as the MoGEI, Defense forces, Prisons, and Wildlife to spearhead negotiations with the school occupants for free learning environments. As a result, schools in Bor remain free from military occupation. Six schools in Rumbek were vacated while only two are still occupied.

In **Guatemala**, Bilingual Intercultural Education was strengthened by implementing coordinated

¹⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-launches-safe-school-declaration-guidelines-support-save-children>



Girls drawing at school in Quiché district, Guatemala.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

actions with partners and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). Learning materials in native languages were developed and endorsed by educational authorities based on the common Literacy Boost approach of Save the Children. An example of how SC and partner work has uptake in the Ministry - however, implementation remains slow due to lack of funding for education at a national level.

As part of the support provided for the implementation of Bilingual Education, Active Language Commissions were established (3 in the Ixil region and 1 in the Ch'orti' region). These committees were responsible for producing materials in native languages with the involvement of teachers, parents, girls, and boys. The participation of local education authorities and their support is essential for the implementation of activities in the areas of intervention, to achieve impact and maintain sustainable processes. The coordinated efforts at the local school governance level combined with policy and systems at a more structural level, have produced results that benefitted not only Norad target schools.

At national level SC Malawi contributed to the process of the amendment of the Education Act to incorporate the banning of Corporal punishment.

An audit report on child related laws and corporal punishment was developed, a position paper drafted, and prohibition of corporal punishment was incorporated in the draft Alternative Care Regulations. In integration with Issue 3, the programme collaborated with Malawi Human Rights Commission MHRC and contributed to the process of the amendment of the Education Act to incorporate banning of Corporal punishment.

In response to a study on teacher absenteeism¹⁵ in Mozambique in 2020, SC developed a pilot for a monitoring approach¹⁶ of teacher absenteeism that was later endorsed by the government for district and provincial use to curb this problem and a social-based approach¹⁷ to be used at all levels to increase teachers' attendance. At the national level, the Ministry of Education is integrating the approach into an existing platform, developed with support from World Education's USAID-Saber program. This decision was made within the teachers' working group, recognizing that multiple organizations, including SC, were creating or had created similar systems for their respective projects. To prevent redundant work, it was agreed that all NGOs should utilize the Ministry's platform. Should the platform prove

15) Study on Determinant causes for Teacher Absenteeism in Mozambique, 2020, Kiyana Consulting

16) Mufundzissi: Addressing Teachers' Absenteeism, 2023, Waliku

17) Fieldnotes for innovation: Developing a social-based approach for teacher absenteeism, 2023, Cubic Sci_

<https://www.savethechildren.net/cubic>

inadequate, NGOs are expected to collaborate in enhancing it, drawing on their collective experiences with similar initiatives.

The Ministry of Social Development in Karnali province, **Nepal**, has adopted best practices from the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme to enhance public education. These include deploying pedagogical experts, providing suitable learning materials for each grade, and improving classroom management and teacher capacity. These initiatives are now province-wide policies. Local governments have institutionalized these practices, evidenced in policy integration and increased educational funding for children, demonstrating a strong commitment to education. The project has also bolstered the capacity of Civil Society Organizations and government structures like School Management Committees and child clubs, to advocate for children's educational rights. These measures ensure the sustainability of educational improvements beyond the project's lifespan.

Change, Covid-19, and Conflict—which significantly undermine educational achievements for children. Recognizing these challenges, we are proactively integrating solutions into our program planning and execution to effectively support governments to fulfil their education commitments and counteract these adverse effects.



Reflections about sustainability – Issue 1

The last 5 years provide evidence to the fact that ensuring quality education is a continuing effort and is easy to halter/destroy but much harder to build or strengthen. The constant threats, manmade disasters, conflict, climate or pandemics like Covid-19, influence the entire education system, affecting children's access to quality education. In a short time, the majority of the schools we worked with were closed and it was difficult to predict the length of the school closures. Teachers were not trained, schools were not rehabilitated, and governments struggled to meet their obligations. However, these troubled times showed the resilience of the people. Governments and civil society worked together to meet the learning needs, tried out varied approaches to ensure that children were safe and healthy, while continuing some form of learning. Education is a fragile system and needs constant nurturing, strong long-term support and updated information and approaches to meet existing as well as new challenges and opportunities.

Globally, these learnings affected how we as an organization define quality education, and the even stronger investments needed to support robust and resilient education systems that can face new shocks and challenges. The Quality Learning Framework (QLF) continues to be our reference point for education, though mindful that the education field is constantly changing. In 2022, SC undertook a thorough review, co-lead by SCN, of the QLF to ensure its principles and strategies reflect the latest research and on-the-ground insights. This update also incorporates strategies to address the '3Cs'—Climate

ISSUE 2: CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

2. CHILDREN ARE PROTECTED

Children are protected from violence and abuse

Outcome 2.1:

Increased access to quality education for girls at risk or affected by child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.

Outcome 2.2:

Transformed social, cultural and gender norms reduce violence against children, including child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.

Outcome 2.3:

Strengthened and coordinated national and community-based child protection systems prevent, identify, report and respond to violence against girls and boys.

Brief overall assessment of the projects effect on society and main lessons learned

Issue 2 under the *Leaving No Child Behind* Programme is dedicated to the overarching ambition for all children to live a life free from violence and abuse. Under this goal, we have been implementing child protection programmes in 12 countries. Of these, 5 countries have targeted child marriage and teenage pregnancies prevention programmes, integrating child protection and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming.

To fulfill children's right to be protected, we have been working across the different levels of the socio-ecological model, enhancing the capacity of children to protect themselves and making informed choices; involving their families and communities to transform harmful social norms, foster positive relationships, building protective environments; and continuing to strengthen and ensure access to child protection services and support systems across all countries. The first years were focused on building a solid evidence base to inform contextualization and roll out Sci's global common approaches; Steps to Protect, Sci's child protection case management guidance, and Parenting without Violence, aimed at reducing physical and humiliating punishment (PHP) by supporting children, parents, and communities to transform the harmful norms driving this practice.

At the programme closure, we see the results of our work at all levels of society. More vulnerable girls are continuing education after dropping out of school due to child marriage and pregnancy. Social norms change is a long-term process that may take decades to achieve lasting changes. Still the EL findings are showing promising results – more community members are opposing the harmful practice of child marriage now compared to 5 years ago. There

is an increase in the number of communities that take collective social actions against child marriages. Looking at the broader violence prevention work, attitudes towards the use of violence in parenting have changed significantly among parents and caregivers. Fewer children are reporting experiencing physical or humiliating punishment, indicating a soft shift in parental practices and behaviors. From a systems-strengthening perspective, we see that local child protection structures have been strengthened, coordination between formal and informal child protection structures have improved, and the number of child protection cases being reported and supported has increased significantly. SC has, together with national and local partners contributed to improving the legal and policy frameworks to protect children from violence in several countries, including the enforcement of these.

While all countries were impacted by Covid-19, the lock down and school closure, programming in some countries were more impacted than others. Social restriction and poverty increased psychosocial stress within the families and contributed to exacerbate child protection risks. Most countries experienced an increase in child protection concerns being identified and reported including gender-based violence. Some countries were more impacted than others, also impacting long-term programme achievements. Whereas for other countries, this contributed to more innovative programming and adaptations of programming approaches allowing for more flexible programming in unstable settings – a good example of this is the programme in Myanmar.

In the following sections, we will provide further details on the overall results under issue 2 by the 3 outcome areas, including highlighting country challenges and achievements.



Girl (16) walks home from school with her baby - Uganda.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Outcome 2.1: Increased access to quality education for girls and boys at risk of or affected by child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.

2.1.1 Number of married girls and teenage mothers re-enrolled to school

2.1.2 Proportion of girls who drop out of school because of child marriage and teenage pregnancy

When looking at the improvement of school return rates and re-enrollment of girls who've dropped out of school due to pregnancy or marriage, the 2023 EL results in the three reporting countries **Malawi**, **Mozambique**, and **Uganda** found that a total of 1,196 girls re-enrolled in school after dropping out due to child marriage or teenage pregnancies, which is a significant progress from 252 girls in 2019, surpassing the EL target of 1,000 girls.

Looking at country results, **Uganda** achieved the most progress for this outcome with a re-enrolment of 690 girls in 2023, closely followed by **Malawi** which re-enrolled 484 girls. In **Mozambique**, 22 girls returned to school in 2023.

At endline in 2023, the proportion of girls dropping out of school who do this because of child marriage and teenage pregnancy was 10%, slightly

better than the revised EL target of 11%. Despite this not representing an overall improvement from BL of 9%, 2 of 3 countries do document a reduction: **Mozambique** (7%-points) and **Uganda** (1%-point). **Malawi** experienced an opposite trend, with a 10%-point increase of dropouts due to child marriage and teenage pregnancies, from 13% at BL to 23% at EL (680 girls). This increase in **Malawi** should be seen in relation to the MT results, documenting a high increase in dropouts to 31% (18%-points increase from BL to MT in 2021), likely due to the school closures and social restrictions during Covid-19. When looking at the progress since the MT, the dropouts were reduced by 8%-points to 23% at EL. In comparison, when looking at girls' return rates in **Malawi**, the picture is more positive. At BL, 26% (131) of girls were returning to school compared to 38% (484) girls at EL, surpassing the EL target (34%).

After 5-years of programming in **Uganda**, there was a small reduction in dropouts (1%-points) due to pregnancy or child marriage at EL, achieving its target of 2%. Due to school closure during the Covid-19 pandemic the MT value was not measured in 2021, however an assessment of the risks and effects of teenage pregnancy and child marriage among girls due to school closure and the Covid-19 lockdown from 2021 revealed that 22% of out of schoolgirls and about 10% of in schoolgirls got pregnant or

married off during the lockdown. The EL return rates showed that the number of married girls and teenage mothers supported to go back to school increased from 91 girls at BL to 690 girls at EL (85% being teenage mothers), surpassing the EL target of 145. Following the reopening of schools after the pandemic, the programme leveraged the safe back to school campaigns and engaged the local community structures, including local council leaders and para social workers to lead the identification and mobilisation of married girls and teenage mothers for their return to school. The rollout of the revised guidelines for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancies in school settings in 2020 allowed for young mothers to return to school. Together with local partners, mental health and psychosocial support services were provided for many married girls and teenage mothers to support their return and re-admission in school. Partner Thrive in Gulu identified and trained volunteer mothers who cared for babies while in school and continued to provide counselling and guidance to child parents. The programme further worked with school administrations and community structures, including PTAs/SMCs and para-social workers to establish school enrollment and attendance tracking mechanism, to ensure married girls and teenage mothers were regularly monitored and supported for their attendance and equitable access to learning.

The programme in **Mozambique** saw a 7%-point reduction in the proportion of girls dropping out of school due to child marriage or pregnancies. When looking at readmission rates of girls dropping out for the same reasons, a positive trend was documented. At BL, only 20% of girls (30) were re-enrolled, compared to 96% at both MT and EL (25 and 22 girls), reaching the target of a 96% readmission rate. This success in improving both the access and retention rate for children, especially girls at risk and those rescued from child marriage, is mainly attributed to the integrated child protection and SRHR programming. To improve girls' access to education, the programme intensified actions at community level to increase awareness in families and communities about the importance of prioritising education for all children, regardless of gender or disability. In parallel, the programme strengthened its work with community-based child protection mechanisms (CBCPM), to identify and refer out-of-school children and children at risk of dropping out back into education. By working with members of the CBCPM and the matrons' structure, first-time parents, and girls at risk of dropping out of school were supported through home visits to support them, to identify pregnancy related risks and to facilitate the reintegration process of the girls, back into education. This collaboration and coordination between community structures and the school was essential for the monitoring mechanism to work effectively to identify children at risk and ensure continued

follow up and support of these vulnerable children. By strengthening the coordination between community-based structures and formal service providers, the sustainability of this work was also improved. The programme also targeted advocacy to improve the capacity in the education sector to retain girls in schools resulting in an increased prioritization in the education sector to promote and adopt gender-sensitive actions to improve the retention of girls such as through earmarking funds for the distribution of menstrual pads in schools.

All countries with child marriage and teenage pregnancies programmes have integrated child protection and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) programming. Over the 5-years of programming, **Mozambique** achieved an increase of 16%-point in adolescents' girls and boys ASRH knowledge to 64% (G: 62%/B: 66%) at EL. More than 25,600 adolescents' girls and boys were provided with access to ASRHR services and information through mobile health brigades in remote communities, training of health professionals, and through provision of comprehensive sexuality education. In **Uganda**, more than 34,300 (G: 60%/B: 40%) in and out of school adolescents were reached with ASRHR information and services resulting in a 20%-points of adolescents' knowledge of ASRHR at EL (to 33%). This increase is mainly attributed to the strengthened capacity of male and female teachers who delivered regular ASRHR and life skills sessions to in and out of school adolescents as guided by School Family Initiative resources and the integrated ASRHR community outreaches supported by qualified health worker which enabled the programme to reach out school adolescent with ASRHR information.

While **Nepal** does not report on the aggregated global Norad indicator, the country programme is monitoring if girls and boys affected by child marriage and teenage pregnancies drop-out or continue in school. At EL, the dropout rates for girls had decreased from 61% to 14%, surpassing the target of 25%. The proportion of girls and boys affected by child marriage and teenage pregnancies that continued school, went from 12% at BL(G:15%/B: 6%) to 76% at EL (G: 77%/B: 70%), surpassing the target of 30%. This is mainly due to the targeted outreach to identify and support children affected by, or at risk of child marriage and pregnancies, through the work of children clubs, para social workers and ward child rights committeees. Activities include awareness raising, parenting without violence parenting interventions, and psychosocial counseling for the children and their parents to support their enrollment in schools. Simultaneously, the programme coordinated with schools to ensure the children's enrollment by offering remedial classes and connecting children with child clubs, adolescent girls' groups, and youth clubs based on their age groups to enhance their confidence and motivation to continue schooling.

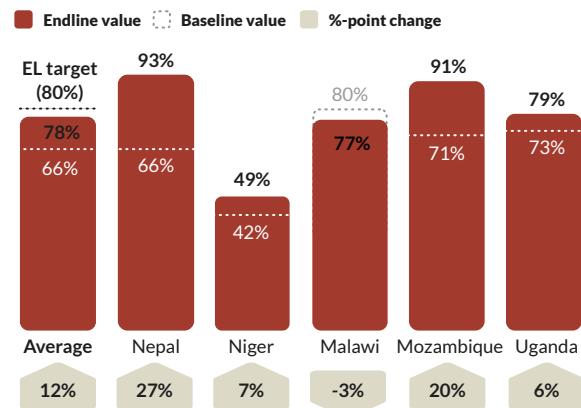
Outcome 2.2: Transformed social, cultural and gender norms reduce violence against children, including child marriage and/or teenage pregnancy.

2.2.1 % of community members who believe child marriage is an unacceptable practice, by sex.

2.2.2 % of communities which have taken collective social actions against child marriage.

In Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Nepal, and Niger, we've specifically addressed the issue of discriminatory gender and social norms that drives the practice of child marriage and teenage pregnancies where we have been tracking community members attitudes and perceptions towards child marriage. BL results from **Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Nepal, and Niger** showed that on average 66% (F: 66%/67%) of community members believed that child marriage was an unacceptable practice. At EL, this increased with 12%-points, to 78% (F: 76%/M: 80%) of community members no longer supporting child marriage. Despite progress, the result is 2%-points below the consolidated EL target at 80%. The gender disaggregation reveals little difference in attitudes among female and male community members, with 4% more men being against child marriage at an aggregated level.

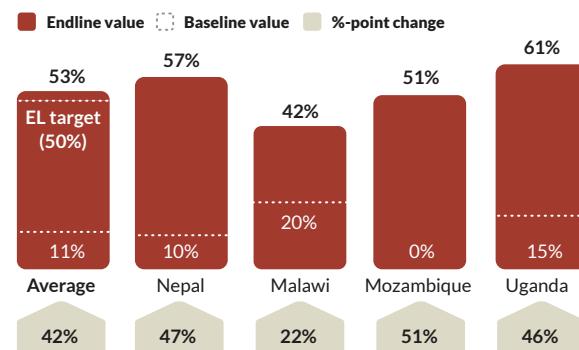
% OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO BELIEVE CHILD MARRIAGE IS AN UNACCEPTABLE PRACTICE



Looking at percentage point increase in the proportion of persons that oppose child marriage by country, **Nepal** (27%-points), **Mozambique** (20%-points), and **Niger** (7%-points) achieved the most progress in terms of shifting perceptions and support for child marriage in the communities. **Malawi** is the only country who experienced a negative devel-

opment, with a 3%-point decrease in the number of community members rejecting the harmful practice. This should be seen in relation to the high increase of child marriage and teenage pregnancies that the country experienced during the pandemic and the key drivers of the practices being poverty or lack of economic and social alternatives. Since the start of the pandemic, Malawi has experienced increased poverty and worsening living standards, hitting the vulnerable populations the hardest¹⁸.

% OF COMMUNITIES WHICH HAVE DECLARED THEMSELVES FREE OF CHILD MARRIAGE



When looking at progress for the number of communities which have taken collective social action against child marriage, 53% (94 out of 181) of the communities had taken action at EL compared to 11% (18) at BL. An overall progress of 42%-points, surpassing the EL target of 50% by 3%-points.

Mozambique saw the most progress with an increase of 51%-points, followed by **Nepal** (47%-point increase) and **Uganda** (46%-point increase).

After 5-years in **Nepal**, the programme has achieved great progress in shifting community perceptions and attitudes towards child marriage. At BL, 66% (F: 63%/M: 68%) of community members were against child marriage, which increased to 93% (F: 91% /M: 95%) to reject the practice at EL. This change is mainly attributed to awareness raising interventions targeting parents to promote positive gender norms and encouraging them to prioritize education for girls instead of child marriage. By drawing on the evidence-based Choices, Voices, and Promises programming approach, very young adolescents (10-14 years) attended sessions following a curriculum developed to challenge discriminatory gender norms and bridge communication gaps between children and their parents. In parallel, their parents and caregivers were engaged in facilitated group sessions to challenge the gendered expectations of their children, fostering dialogue between parents and children on gender equity. The imple-

18) Unicef Malawi (2024): The cost of Covid-19 on children in Malawi. [https://www.unicef.org/malawi/media/11231/file/Cost_of_COVID19_Study_A4_Web%20\(1\).pdf.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/malawi/media/11231/file/Cost_of_COVID19_Study_A4_Web%20(1).pdf.pdf)

mentation of weekly family meetings and inter-generational dialogues guided by an agreed-upon code of conduct proved instrumental in creating positive attitudes towards gender equality among children.

This progress in **Nepal** is also mirrored when looking at results related to collective actions and social declarations against child marriage at community level. At BL, only 10% (5 wards) had declared themselves free from child marriage, but at the end of the programme, this had increased to 57% (28 wards). The success of the programme in Nepal is mainly explained by the close partnership the programme has had with the local government. Through coordination and collaboration with the local level government, they committed to prevent child marriage in their jurisdictions. This included investment in child marriage prevention strategies, appointment of Child Welfare Officers, formation of child protection mechanisms, policy development, establishment of Child Funds, and improvement of case management. The progress made is further supported by the observed change in child protection structures low level of engagement in child marriage prevention work at the onset of the programme, compared to at the programme end, with a significant increase in the number of child marriage related child protection cases reported, from 78 cases (G: 46/B: 32) to 432 cases (G: 294/B: 138) at EL.

In **Mozambique**, about 91% of community members (F: 90%/M: 92%) were against child marriages at EL, an increase from 71% at BL. When looking at the number of communities taking some action to free themselves from child marriage, the EL showed a progress of 51%-points from 0% at BL. To achieve these results, the programme combined strategic actions in coordination with government actors and community-based child protection mechanisms to raise awareness among community members. About 214 (F: 98/M: 116) community facilitators facilitated 285 community dialogue sessions with 8,823 people (F: 4,836, M: 3,987). Through strengthening of the identification and referral of child protection cases, a total of 597 children (G: 328/B: 269), including 172 cases of girls in child marriage were referred and received psychosocial support, reintegration into education and case management support. 50 of the child marriage cases were resolved and closed with the support of the justice system and the communities. At a national level, using Midea (community radio, television, and mobile communication brigades), key messages were also disseminated to influence communities' attitudes towards the harmful practice. At programme closure, all target communities had functional, safe, and accessible child protection mechanisms and safe spaces for children's participation.

While the 5-years programme in **Mozambique** have observed a lot of progress, some key challenges have also been documented. One being the lack of effective enforcement of the child marriage law, which has caused under-reporting of child marriage cases at community level. To address, this the programme has in partnership with the government contributed to strengthening multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms at national, provincial and district level. Through the Reference Groups, led by the Attorney General's Office, joint activity plans were developed to support the government in activities to prevent and respond to violence against children and human trafficking. Key efforts included joint monitoring visits to provide support at grassroots level, organizing community accountability sessions and giving feedback to communities on reported cases, stimulating the holding of case conferences to improve rapid response and assistance to victims. Due to the massive investment at Manica province level, the provincial reference group has been recognized as the best coordination mechanism in the country without any financial resources. As a result, from 2024 onwards, this group's good practices will be replicated throughout the country.

2.2.3 % of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by parents/caregivers in the past month by sex and disability.

2.2.4 % of parents who believe that punishment is acceptable, by sex.

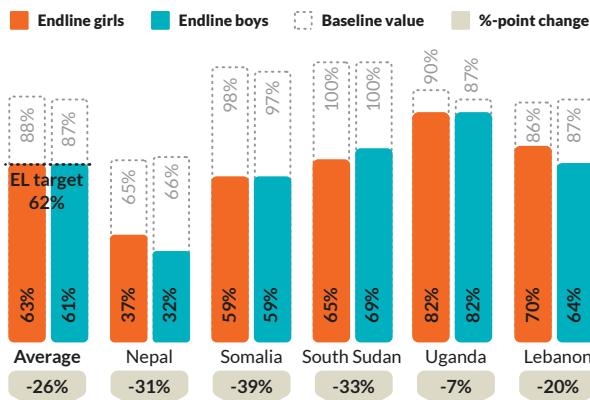
In **Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Myanmar, Nepal, and Lebanon**, we have implemented a broader violence against children programming with the aim to prevent children from experiencing physical and humiliating punishment in their homes by transforming the harmful social norms driving these practices. When looking at the number of **children experiencing any physical and/or psychological aggression by parents or caregivers**, the EL found that 62% of children (G: 63%/B: 61%) had experienced this, a 26%-points (G: 26% /B: 25%) reduction from BL, reaching the EL target on 62%. While a reduction is seen in all 5 reporting countries (Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Lebanon)¹⁹, the most progress was seen in **Somalia** (-39%-points reduction), followed by **South Sudan** (-33%-points) and **Nepal** (-31%-points).

Looking at the situation for children in 2024, the **lowest level of physical and humiliating punishment (PHP)** was documented in **Nepal** with 35% (G: 37%/B: 32%) and **Somalia** with 59% (G: 59%/B: 59%) of children experiencing PHP at EL. Whereas the

¹⁹) Myanmar is not included in aggregated reporting, due to changed implementation modality and comparable data only from MTR to EL.

highest level of violence was measured in **Uganda** (82%), **South Sudan**, and **Lebanon** (both at 67%). There were no significant differences between boys and girls. Disaggregation of the results by children with disabilities (Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda) shows that at EL more children with disabilities report experiencing PHP compared to children without disabilities. This is a change from MT, where children without disabilities reported experiencing more PHP than children with disabilities.

% OF CHILDREN AGED 1-17 YEARS WHO EXPERIENCED ANY PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT AND/OR PSYCHOLOGICAL AGGRESSION BY PARENTS/CAREGIVERS IN THE PAST MONTH (DISAGGREGATED BY GENDER AND DISABILITY)



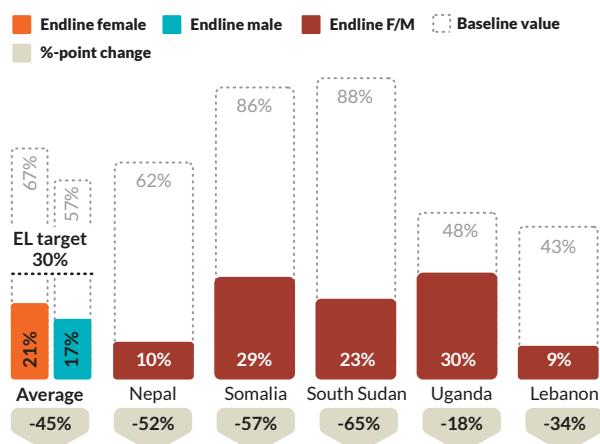
Mozambique is the only country that used child-based reporting at EL whereas the other countries collected data through caregiver/parents' questionnaires²⁰. At BL 30% (G: 23%/B: 38%) of children reported experiencing physical or psychological aggression by parents or caregivers and at EL, this was reduced to 15% (G: 11%/B: 18%). Looking at the gender disaggregation, still more boys (18%) than girls (11%) are experiencing violence. But the gender gap was reduced at EL, with a 20%-point decrease among boys compared to a 12%-points reduction among girls.

When looking at **caregivers' attitudes towards acceptability of using punishment to discipline their children**, overall, results are positive. There was a decrease from 65% (F: 67%; M: 57%) at BL to 20% (F: 21%; M: 17%) at EL of caregivers who believe PHP is acceptable across Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, and Lebanon. This surpassed the EL target of 30%, with a decrease of 45%-points (F: 46%-points/M: 40%-points) compared to the attitude measurement at BL. There is a larger reduction among female, than male caregivers, which has reduced the gender gap significantly from 10%-points at BL to 4%-points at EL. While all countries have achieved significant progress in terms of shifting parents and caregivers support of PHP,

3 countries have achieved more than a 50%-point reduction, including South Sudan (-65%-points), Somalia (-56%-points), and Nepal (-52%-points). Of these countries, Nepal (10%) and Lebanon (9%) are also the countries with the lowest proportion of caregivers who accept the use of PHP. While the higher proportion is still found in South Sudan (23%), Somalia (29%) and also Uganda (30%).

In **Somalia**, there has been a reduction of the prevalence of children experiencing PHP from 97% to 59% (G/B: 59%), surpassing the EL target, of 62%. Parents and caregivers have made positive changes in their parenting style, with a significant decrease in the use of punishment as a disciplinary method. The acceptance of PHP dropped by 57%-points from 86% at BL to 29% at EL. This is likely caused by the implementation of the Parenting without Violence approach, targeting parents and families to empower and equip parents and caregivers with the skills and resources to nurture safer family environments by using positive discipline and parental education, inter-generational dialogues, and peer support to shift perceptions, attitudes, and practices of PHP. The programme has also identified champions from each of the parent/caregivers' cohorts to engage and mobilize community members through peer education. Further, to address the challenge of social stigma associated with children with disabilities in remote communities, the programme also provided targeted training of parents and caregivers by OPDs as a part of the positive parenting programming. This resulted in positive changes in the parents and caregivers' attitudes towards disabilities, contributing to improving the identification of, and increased enrollment of, children with disabilities into schools.

% OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS WHO BELIEVE THAT PUNISHMENT IS ACCEPTABLE



A closer look at the gender disaggregation of parents and caregivers' attitudes towards PHP shows that **Somalia** (F: 31%/M: 20%) and **South Sudan** (F:

20) Palestine also had child-based reporting at baseline, but were not able to collect endline data.

26%/M: 15%) still face significant gender gaps at programme end. The difference between genders is likely to be explained by the fact that in both countries women often are the primary caregivers and highlights the need for support systems that address the challenges faced by female caregivers.

Both **South Sudan** and **Nepal** have documented good progress on positive parenting due to the Parenting without Violence (PwV) programming approach and broader community work on child protection (see further details under outcome 2.4). South Sudan saw a decrease from a 100% of children reporting having experienced PHP by parents and caregivers to 67% (G: 65%/B: 67%). This progress is also mirrored by parents and caregivers changing attitudes towards the use of PHP, with a 65%-points decline at EL. These promising results are attributed to the work with the positive parenting sessions as part of the PwV approach, reaching 4,120 parents and caregivers (F: 1,298/M: 822). Through parent and caregivers' session and child-parents' sessions, the participants have gained knowledge, skills, and new ways of parenting and supervising their children, reducing the incidences of violence against children at home. In **Nepal**, the EL showed that the percentage of children experiencing PHP was almost halved (by 31%-points) since program start. As in the case of Somalia and South Sudan, the PwV approach has played a crucial role in empowering parents with an understanding of their children's developmental phases, stress management, and overall parenting skills. Through structured parenting sessions, inter-generational dialogue and training on child protection, child rights, and leadership skills, they all played a crucial role in contributing to these results. Moreover, the programme in Nepal facilitated additional interventions such as peer-to-peer support, door-to-door visits, rallies, and various day celebrations, all of which were deemed crucial in raising awareness on violence prevention among children. These efforts not only helped children identify various forms of violence and corresponding preventive measures but also made them aware of existing service providers at the local level.

The MTR in **Lebanon**, revealed an alarming increase in the psychological distress among parents and caregivers, contributing to high levels of domestic violence. Following the economic collapse, political instability, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on this, the programme strengthened its work towards parents and caregivers contextualizing the PwV approach. Positive discipline and emotional support group sessions targeting caregivers significantly contributed to enhance child well-being and caregivers noted the intervention's positive impact on their lives and its role in fostering healthier family relationships. By gaining valuable insights into child development, communication, and conflict resolution, participants experienced significant shifts in their perspectives. Furthermore, male caregivers

actively shared their newfound knowledge, advocating for alternative communication methods and enhancing their parenting skills. Awareness sessions, facilitated by trained committee members, successfully promoted child protection within camp communities. Children and adolescents were supported with peer-to-peer psychological first aid trainings based on the "I Support My Friends" approach, providing emotional support and assistance to individuals who might be experiencing psychological distress, stress, anxiety, or facing challenging situations, providing them with self-care techniques. In **Myanmar**, SC's technical input based on the PwV approach contributed to a nationally approved positive parenting framework. At the national level, key programme stakeholders actively participated in the Positive Discipline Task Force to provide expert technical review and inputs for the development of a national standardized manual on positive discipline. This manual was adopted by the Department of Social Welfare and disseminated nationwide for implementation as the government's parenting program in Myanmar.

Overall, **Uganda** has also seen a positive change in parents and caregivers' attitudes towards PHP. EL findings showed that the proportion of parents and caregivers who supported PHP was reduced from 48% (F: 53%/M: 39%) to 30% (F: 29%/M: 32%) at EL. However, when looking at the percentage of children experiencing PHP by parents and caregivers, progress was much lower with only a reduction of 7%-points, far from the target on 40%. This indicates that while there has been progress in terms of changing parents and caregivers' attitudes, a big challenge is to move towards behavioural change. Although adjustments were made to support the rollout out of the positive parenting work. A considerable number of communities did not benefit from this because of the social lock down during Covid-19 which disrupted the wider programme implantation.

Outcome 2.3: Strengthened and coordinated national and community-based child protection systems prevent, identify, report, and respond to violence against girls and boys.

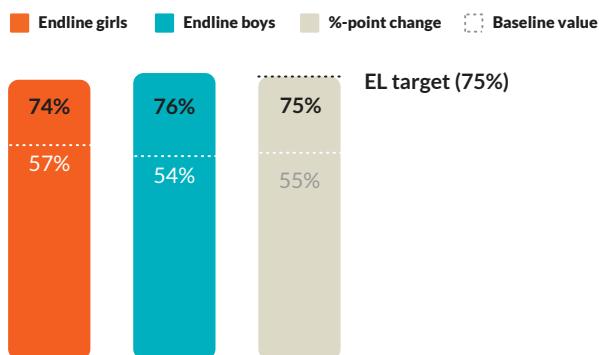
2.3.1 % of child protection cases, among those reported during the last 12 months, that were responded to by CP mechanisms by sex and disability.

2.3.2 % of community child protection mechanisms supported by SC that are active in reporting and referring child protection cases.

Strengthening the communities' child protection structures and improving the coordination between these informal child protection structures and

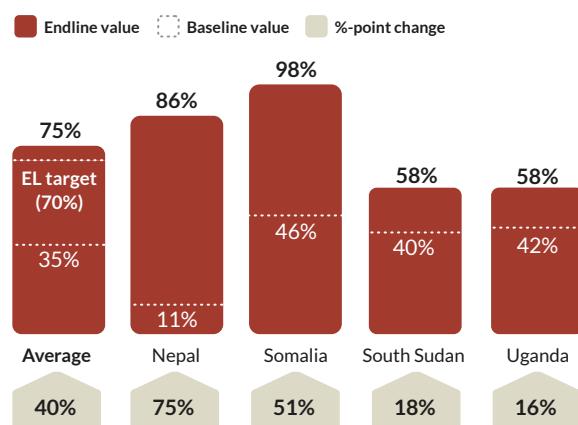
formal sub-national and national structures are a key priority to ensure sustainable child protection programming. After 5-years of the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme the EL shows that 75% of Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPM) were actively performing their tasks in identifying, registering, referring and/or responding to child protection cases, a 40%-points increase from BL (35%), surpassing the target on 70% with 5%-points²¹.

% OF CHILD PROTECTION CASES, AMONG THOSE IDENTIFIED & REGISTERED DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS, THAT WERE RESPONDED TO BY CP MECHANISMS (DISAGGREGATED BY GENDER & DISABILITY)



Looking at country level results, all countries documented positive progress for this work, ranging from **Somalia** and **Nepal** with the highest share of active CBCPM at 98% and 86% to South Sudan and Uganda which both were at 58% at EL. Guatemala was included at a later stage, and is only able to report on EL numbers with 50% of CBCPM reported to be active in 2023.

% OF COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION MECHANISMS SUPPORTED BY SC THAT ARE ACTIVE IN IDENTIFYING & REGISTERING, REFERRING, AND/OR RESPONDING TO CHILD PROTECTION CASES



The number of registered child protection cases that were responded to by child protection mechanisms, increased from 55% (G: 57%/B: 54%) at BL to 75% (F:74%/B:76%) at EL - an increase of 20%-points, meeting the target of 75% of registered cases to be managed²². Of the 4 countries with comparable BL-EL data, 3 of the countries documented solid progress. **Somalia** and **Uganda** documented the most progress with a respective increase of 51%-points and 36%-points. While **Nepal** only achieved a 12%-points increase, they reached a 100% response rate of registered cases in 2023. **South Sudan** is the only country that has experienced a regression under this outcome, with a 20%-points decrease of cases responded to. After 2021, 2 additional countries started to report on case management, **Myanmar**, and **Niger**. For these countries, the change in % of cases which are responded to cannot be documented but the EL results are 56% for **Myanmar** and 92% for **Niger**.

South Sudan's regression in management of child protection cases at EL is mainly due to the CO's shift in its operational strategy and its decision to phase out of Rumbek. An implication of this is that the programme will not be taking on any new child protection cases as the priority has been to close the open cases. Building capacity of local partners has been a main strategy for ensuring sustainability. New cases will therefore be picked up by local partners with support from local government structures. In addition, to sustain outcomes CBCPM will continue collaborating with formal and informal stakeholders on child protection.

Looking at the gender disaggregation for the 4 countries with comparable data (Somalia, Nepal South Sudan and Uganda), the number of cases responded to was slightly higher for girls than boys (G: 57%/B: 54%), but this gap was insignificant at EL (G: 75%/B: 76%). At country level, particularly **South Sudan** and **Uganda** have succeeded with closing the gender gap for boys. In South Sudan, the gender gap for boys was reduced from a 20%-points less response-rate at BL to only a 5%-point less response at EL. In Uganda, it is reversed. At BL the response rate for boys was 20%-points lower compared to girls whereas at EL, it is 16%-points higher. In **Somalia**, the gender-gap seen at BL was 30%-point lower for girls than boys. This was reduced at EL, with 3%-points higher response rate for girls than boys.

The programme in **Nepal**, has supported the establishment and strengthening of child protection mechanisms, including the formation and functionalization of local and ward level child rights committees, local level referral mechanisms, development of reporting and responding guidelines, and capacity building of child protection actors. Support was also

21) Reporting countries for change from baseline to endline: Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda.

22) Reporting countries for change from baseline to endline: Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda.

provided at local level for the management of data related to children at risk of child protection violations and the prioritization of cases. These efforts combined have strengthened the local child protection mechanisms and their active involvement in the identification of child protection concerns, supported by para-social workers, contributing to the increasing number of cases reported and supported. The EL shows that 4,848 cases were reported and responded to by child protection mechanisms during the last 12 months, a 100% response rate. This is significant progress compared to the BL where 452 out of 515 cases were responded to (an 88% response rate). Various reporting mechanisms were supported at community level, including helplines, toll-free numbers, police assistance and Ward Child rights Committees. At a school level, complaint and response mechanisms were established to address children's concerns which has resulted in a higher rate of reporting. According to the EL children's feeling of safety both at community level and in school has increased with 23%-points and 33%-points.

Child protection Case management in Myanmar

After the coup in Myanmar, child protection risks increased significantly in the country, including in Magway Region and Kayah State. Boys and girls faced threats of extreme violence due to ongoing conflict and displacement. Following this change in context, adaptations were made to the child protection case management and referral process to simplify it and ensure basic support and services for children at risk. Since 2021, SCI and its partners have extended case-based assistance to children affected by the national crisis by strengthening the child protection capacity in communities through community social workers who are volunteers, trained, with very light case management capacity. The case-based support approach also offers more flexibility in addressing a broader range of children's issues, such as psychosocial stress cases. Through the community social workers presence in the communities, children at-risk of child protection concerns received essential support and services throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and the continued conflict in the country. From 2021-2023, there was an enhancement in the community social workers' competency and case management as they sustained a 90% achievement (F:86%/M: 100%) of child protection competencies from 2021 to 2023. The number of child protection cases referred to and managed by SCI or partner's caseworkers increased from 63 cases to 237 (G:133/ B: 104) cases by the end of 2023.

While the child protection programming in **Guate-mala** has faced challenges over the 5-year period, positive progress was documented for the work with CBCPMs at EL. In 2023, 150 members of the CBCPMs (F: 65%/M: 35%) were trained on children's rights and child protection concerns, disability inclusion, and socio-emotional support, enabling them to identify and refer cases of children in need of protection. Further, referral pathways to prevent the re-victimization of vulnerable children were established. There are multiple limitations in public services that affect the level of protection that children should have in the country. The constant turnover of personnel in overseeing institutions, coupled with poor inter-agency coordination for cases referral, and centralized urban protection services, leads to delayed and ineffective responses in remote communities.

With 98% of CBCPMs reported being active at EL, **Somalia** exceeded its target of 80%, with a 52%-points increase from BL. The programme monitoring shows that CBCPMs meet regularly, keep records of their meetings, identify and refer cases to case workers and carry out awareness sessions in the communities. This has also been an important contribution to the improvement of the response rates to the child protection case management which increased from 29% to 89% at EL. The programme aimed to improve the quality of case management services by training both formal and non-formal actors. Key efforts to improve the quality of case management services was through the recruitment of child protection caseworkers, equipping child welfare committees (CBCPM) and child protection focal persons with the necessary skills to effectively identify, report, refer, and follow up on child protection cases. The involvement of trained Child Welfare Committee members played a crucial role in addressing children's rights issues and facilitating collaboration with parents and school administrations. Through this approach, the programme fostered a sense of ownership and community empowerment by involving local communities in resolving child protection concerns.

Uganda's child protection system has struggled with fragmentation and lack of coordination across child protection structures at a national and sub-national level, contributing to inefficient case management process including identification, reporting and referrals of cases. To address this, the programme adjusted its approach in 2021, to strengthen the capacity of the community level Para Social Workers and sub-county Social Welfare Officers through the rollout of the national Para Social Workers Curriculum within a few selected programming areas. The Para-social workers play a tremendous role in child protection case identification, reporting and referral at community and sub county level and this investment in capacity building greatly improved the case management. While budget constraints meant the scale was limited, this will be expanded in the next programming phase.

Piloting Seeds in Mozambique, a community-led approach to child protection

Mozambique has piloted Sci's new the community-led child protection approach, Seeds, where communities themselves lead the process of identifying risks, planning, and implementing actions that contribute to children's well-being. Currently, the pilot has involved around 209 adults (F: 141/M: 58/PwD: 11) and 240 children (B: 121/G: 119 girls/CwD: 12) in active discussions to identify child protection problems and potential actions to prevent and resolve them. These include the prevention of unsafe migration at the Manica cross border, child labor and related school dropouts, safety, and protection on the way to and from school, child marriage and sexual and gender-based violence, especially affecting girls. During the first phase, under the leadership of community counsellors, 15 community facilitators were engaged to facilitate discussions in 13 communities, of which 9 communities were able to develop and implement their action plans. This has resulted in communities building schools to improve access to education, establishment of community monitoring mechanisms through which cases of child labor and child marriages were identified and reported. A comparison of Seeds and the traditional approach to working with CBCPMs showed that with CBCPMs, the process of identifying and referring cases of child protection concern was easy and often led by the agency, but with Seeds, collective action to solve identified child protection problems was widely recognized at community level. It is also noted that the Seeds approach genuinely strengthens the link between communities and the formal sector as they seek support to implement their actions and prevent dependency to non-governmental organization.

with children themselves, their families, and communities, and in close partnership with local organisations, the government, and the broader civil society at all levels.

Specific examples of these strategies, is how we through our child protection programming are building on existing community structures, supporting, and revitalizing them, to enable them to take actions on behalf children in their communities. In parallel, we work with formal child protection structures, to build their capacity and improve coordination and collaboration between formal and informal child protection actors to improve the functionality and efficiency of the child protection structures from local to national level. All our programmes also include a component specifically aimed at contributing to enabling policy and legal environments through capacity building of formal stakeholders, building knowledge and awareness on existing legal and policy frameworks to protect children from violence, and budget advocacy.

As in the case of Mozambique and Malawi, while there currently exist strong legal frameworks to protect children from children marriage, the lack of effective enforcement nurtures mistrust to the system and results in under-reporting of cases and local solutions. Through a close partnership with the government in Nepal, we have achieved long term impact through the development of multi-sectoral costed action plans addressing violence against children, including child marriage in 5 operational local levels. Budget was allocated to implement the plans and implementation has continued with the support of local level stakeholders. While Somalia has achieved great progress under the LNOB programme, with a significant reduction of the prevalence of children experiencing PHP and parents and caregivers having made positive changes in their parenting style – a key learning from the current phase is the need to adopt a more systematic approach to engage and draw on local champions through adult peer education and by strengthening the collaboration with other community-based structures and when feasible local governments. This strategy aims at sustaining the efforts of raising awareness and sharing knowledge on positive parenting even after the programme has phased out.



Reflections about sustainability – Issue 2

Applying programming strategies that contributes to lasting impact is a continuous priority for our programming work, from design phase through implementation (in changing contexts), until programme closure. Through our work to ensure that children are protected against violence and abuse, we are drawing on the socio-ecological framework for violence prevention and response by applying change strategies, aimed at addressing root causes through social norm change at all levels of the model. This is done through close collaboration and engagement

ISSUE 3: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ARE IMPLEMENTED

3. CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Governments are held to account by a strong civil society and meet their obligations to implement children's rights

Outcome 3.1:

Strengthened civil society including children mobilized to promote children's rights.

Outcome 2.2:

Civil Society including children, monitor government's implementation of child right.

Outcome 2.3:

Strengthened government institutions implement children's rights.

Brief overall assessment of the projects effect on society and main lessons learned.

Despite global progress towards implementing child rights, governments fall short of their commitments under the Child Rights Convention (UNCRC). To address these challenges, under Child Rights Governance (CRG), this programme has worked to strengthen civil society including children to demand children's rights, improve accountability of government and other duty bearers through monitoring the implementation of children's rights, and strengthen government institutions to implement child rights.

We see the impact of our efforts on the improved capacity of civil society. During the last five years and through the Leave No One Behind framework agreement, Save the Children has developed the capacity of 96 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) partners. At endline, partners reached, on average, 86% of the capacity enhancement milestones that they set at the start of the programme, surpassing the EL target by 11% points. At a time when civil society and civic space is under threat in many countries, this programme has contributed towards strengthening the financial, organisational, operational, thematic and advocacy capacity of CSOs to demand the realisation of child rights.

Save the Children and our partners have also contributed towards the submission of a total of 33 supplementary civil society reports to UN and regional monitoring bodies, surpassing by 11 the set target. Out of these, 7 were child-led reports (children developed reports on their own), and the rest were informed by children's opinions and priorities. In addition, 8 supplementary reports have been prepared and ready for submission, 2 of which were child-led. This achievement not only highlights the improved capacity of civil society organisations to hold the governments to account for delivering on their commitments to children, but it is also a strat-

egy for bringing children's and communities' concerns and ideas up to the top decision-making levels of each country. We note that in several instances, governments have accepted key recommendations/concluding observations and acted on them to deliver on their commitments to children's rights, a process which will continue to impact children in the years to come.

The impact of the programme is also clear in the institutional changes we have affected at different levels of government, in the form of policies or legislative changes. We have worked with children, CSOs and strategic partners to draft, advocate for and support the adoption/amendment of 8 laws, 24 policies and 102 other guidelines, rules and procedures in how the formal government structures deliver child rights. These changes have come about through long-term, concerted and consultative processes which often have had the added value of raising awareness and mobilising support for child rights, and crafting spaces for engagement between rights-holders and duty-bearers. The total of 134 changes is almost double the 75 targeted changes.

In the following sections, we outline some illustrative examples of the achievement of this programme during the last five years.

Outcome 3.1: Strengthened civil society including children mobilized to implement children's rights.

3.1.1 Proportion of civil society partner capacity enhancement milestones met

The programme has supported civil society organizations (CSOs) to strengthen their organizational and technical capacities and governance structures, so that they are better able to hold the government to account on its obligations to implement child rights.



Children, CSOs and government agencies call for an end to the war on children in Colombia.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

This was done through conducting partner capacity assessments, and then working jointly with partners to identify gaps, developing capacity enhancement plans, and agreeing on milestones related to thematic knowledge and skills and to internal policies and practices.

Strengthening CSOs

The programme has supported a range of CSOs in the different countries. Save the Children **Somalia** has supported and built the capacity of Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) such as the Somali Disability Network (SDN) and the Puntland Disability Organization Network (PDON). Through capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance, and collaboration, we strengthened these OPDs to actively engage in the review process of the National Disability Bill. Their involvement ensured that the proposed legislation will adequately address the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities. In **Mozambique**, SC supported the National Disability Network (FAMOD) to coordinate and lead CSO engagement in the formulation process of the Bill of Rights of People with Disability. In addition to the technical support on the Bill, FAMOD submitted a complaint letter to the UN Senior Legal Advisor

on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) when the government delayed the signing of the Bill. This resulted in international pressure and contributed to the government submitting the Bill to Parliament for approval by the end of 2023. Prior to the coup in **Myanmar**, SC supported 4 out of 6 CSO partners to develop and launch their Organisational Capacity Building plans, aimed at improving the knowledge and skills with regards to child rights, and to enhance the collaboration among CSOs to take collective actions on child rights. CSOs saw improvements in terms of their child rights capacities, networking with other child rights actors and advocacy efforts, as evident in their integration of child rights in organizational policies, project design and planning. However, the coup forced many of the partners to go incognito or scale down their engagements, and SC's capacity building of CSOs shifted to focus on child rights violations reporting and advocacy. In **Palestine**, SC supported Marsad to develop a gender unit, which in turn supported other partners in streamlining gender in their work. Partners, including those that used to think gender irrelevant to their work, documented internal changes in their procedures, and practices. The partners now disaggregate their data based on gender, 20% of

partners have established a gender unit, and 80% have endorsed gender related policies.

CSO Networks and Alliances

The programme has supported the establishment and strengthening of CSO networks and alliances, as a means to amplify civil society efforts to advocate for and support implementation of child rights. In **Niger**, SC succeeded in creating and strengthening a consultative platform between UN agencies, INGOs and CSOs, including children's organisations. The aim of the platform is to increase and improve child-centred advocacy efforts, in particular by revitalising the Towards Ending Child Marriage platform. The platform has facilitated collaborative action including coordinating child rights reporting, commemoration of the Day of the African Child, and joint efforts during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. In **Lebanon**, SC established and hosted the Alliance of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) from September 2019. The Alliance holds local and national authorities in Lebanon accountable for fulfilling their duties toward children's rights by promoting improved cooperation and information exchange. In 2023, the coalition reached a significant milestone by drafting a joint statement on the impact of the war in Gaza and Lebanon on children's rights, development, and mental health. In **Mozambique**, reducing SC direct implementation means giving more space and channelling more funds to partners. SC has established the 3R and PLASOC platforms, which have proved that they can lead and coordinate CRG interventions. Since 2020 the 3R Platform has brought together the 3 main national child rights networks (Rede CAME, Rede da Criança and ROSC), to have a joint child rights advocacy agenda. Also established in 2020, PLASOC is a Manica-based provincial CSO Platform, which led the implementation of CCSA, public budget advocacy and Chimoio level child participation interventions. 3R and PLASOC have been the drivers and accelerators of child rights interventions in Maputo and Manica.

Civic Space

In the last years we have also seen significant shrinking of civic space, with governments in several countries passing restrictive NGO laws. In **Palestine**, designation of long-standing partner Defense for Children International (DCI) as a hostile organization by Israel was a major setback to child rights work. To enable DCI to continue supporting children as human rights defenders and national drivers of change and accountability, while at the same time minimizing any risks for SC in Palestine, the modality of their partnership has been changed and DCI was a direct partner of SCN. At the same time, Palestinian Authorities have also attempted to amend the regulation for non-profit organizations, so as to impose additional prior approval of grants proce-

dures. This was stopped, partly thanks to lobbying from CSOs, such as the Adalah coalition, where the programme's partner Marsad is a member. The CSO registration law of 2022 in **Myanmar** is further eroding civic space, thus limiting SC partnerships with local CSOs. **Malawi** parliament passed the NGO Act Amendment Bill which CSOs see as government's move to control and silence them. Among others, the amendment revised the registration fee for CSOs from K50,000 to K5 million (approx. 5 USD to 500 USD) and put in place high demands for accountability of funds CSOs receive. These laws have also resulted in COs having to end or significantly change their partnerships.

Children's Groups/Child Parliaments

In addition to supporting the strengthening of CSOs and networks, the programme also strengthened children's groups. This is done with the aim of supporting children's participation in decision making as a goal on its own and as a step to improving good governance for children. In the occupied territories of **Palestine**, SC supports the establishment and functioning of the child-led Palestinian Child Council. The Council's activities have changed after the outbreak of the recent war: While children used to meet with ministries and other duty-bearers, they now engage in meetings with the UN Special Rapporteur of Human Rights in the oPt in October 2024 and with INGOs including SC. The Council strives to be accessible to children with disabilities, for instance by providing sign language translation, choosing accessible locations, reducing noise and limiting visual clutter. In **Somalia**, the child clubs' advocacy and campaign work have brought about significant changes at the community, school, family, and individual. For example, the clubs raised awareness about the importance of education in the wider community, contributing towards improved attitudes towards education and increased enrolment rates. In **Uganda**, SC has supported child rights clubs as a platform for children to advocate for their rights, create awareness on issues affecting them and support each other to be accountable and promote their rights. By end of the program, 2594 children (1213 boys and 1381 girls) including those with disabilities have become members of child rights clubs in the schools. In addition, SC supported children's councils at sub-county levels and supported them to hold dialogues with sub-county leaders, making petitions to sub-county and district leaders on critical children's issues such as school feeding.

In **Myanmar**, SC and partners organised a "Vote for Children" campaign in 2020, for children to dialogue with political parties and candidates and call for prioritizing child rights in their election manifestos and political agenda. Candidates from over 30 political parties attended the dialogues and committed to work for child rights when in office. After the election, SC and partners started the



Child Parliaments elections in Tambara- Mozambique.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

process of engaging the incumbents to establish a parliament caucus for child rights. However, the military coup halted this process. In Lebanon, In March 2023, SC supported ten children of Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian nationalities (6 girls and 4 boys) to participate in a regional discussion with the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, Dr. Najat Mjid. The discussion focused on violence against children in the digital context, both in terms of harm online and how to use the digital environment to affect positive change: the urgency of the rise and extensive dissemination of digital risks that endanger children, exposing them to a variety of harms, including cyberbullying, online sexual exploitation, trafficking, hate speech, and more. By the end of March, the Special Representative presented the annual report to the Human Rights Council via live streaming video. In Malawi, the programme supported the establishment and strengthening of Child Parliaments in 3 districts which as mentioned below has been scaled up by Government and partners to 23. This was a result of consistent advocacy from SC and children. During the commemoration of Global Children's Day on 20th November 2020, child parliamentarians from Mwanza, Neno and Mzimba South jointly with other children from across the country influenced the

State President to issue a directive for Children's Parliament to be scaled up to all the 28 districts of Malawi.

Outcome 3.2: Improved accountability of government and other duty-bearers of their obligation to monitor and implement children's rights.

3.2.1 Supplementary reports prepared and submitted to international bodies that are child led/informed

To ensure that governments fulfil their responsibility to implement the UNCRC, civil society plays an important role holding duty bearers to account. This is done through a variety of platforms such as engaging with international human rights reporting mechanisms, demanding accountability from duty bearers at the local level and influencing the private sector to implement child rights.

Child Rights Reporting Processes

Civil society plays an important role in providing additional information to international and regional

human rights bodies that monitor the state's implementation of child rights, through submission of supplementary reports. SC has provided support to child-led reports (reports developed and submitted by children themselves) and CSO child-informed reports (reports by CSOs or CSO child rights coalitions/networks/alliances informed by consultations with children). In 2020, SC in **South Sudan** completed and presented its first UNCRC child-led supplementary report, marking the culmination of a process that began in 2018 and involved eight child groups. SC in **Colombia** worked together with the Alliance for Colombian Children and COALICO (an organisation against the recruitment of children into armed conflict) as well as other child rights CSOs to support the first child-led supplementary report to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Children from each participating organisation selected one representative, who presented the groups' priorities and drafted the report. From SC, "Ana Sofia" focused on children in armed conflict and on forced recruitment. The child-led report took the form of a news broadcast and was titled "Impact: The Voice of Children". It was launched in Bogotá in 2023 and will be submitted to the UN CRC Committee for its review of Colombia. In **Niger**, SC worked with INGOs and coalitions of Nigerien CSOs, including child-led organisations (Cadre Consultatif Nigeriennes des Enfants et Jeunes-CCNEJ2, Association des Enfants et Jeunes Travailleurs-AEJT and Jeunes Volontaires pour l'Environnement-JVE) to harmonise data collection tools and conduct child consultations to produce a supplementary report on the CRC. The State report was delayed by the coup in July 2023, but SC and partners will advocate with and support the state to report in 2023/2024. More than 10% (20/190) of the children consulted during the information gathering process for the alternative child report are disabled children. This was possible thanks to the strong involvement of our partner, the Organisation for Persons with Disabilities FHPH. In **Uganda**, SC has been working with international and national NGOs under the umbrella of Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN) to prepare four child-informed supplementary reports to child rights monitoring bodies, out of which two have been submitted: to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) during the 40th Session of UN Human Rights Council, with most of their recommendations being accepted by the State as well as to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) and engaged with the government in implementing the ACERWC recommendations.

Child-Centred Social Accountability

The programme has also supported children and civil society to monitor child rights implementation at the local and national level and hold service providers and decision makers to account for delivering on their commitments to children. This has often been

done through child-centred social accountability (CCSA) platforms. In **Somalia**, SC and our partners worked with children's groups, CSOs and local government officials who assessed the quality of public services (education and health in particular) using the community score card methodology. Their findings include issues such as insufficient classrooms, shortage of female teachers, lack of school feeding programs and a lack of feedback mechanisms in hospitals. CSOs and children in Garowe and Abudwak presented findings to the local authorities, who developed action plans and assigned a committee to further assess and address these issues. One tangible result was that the authorities of Garowe engaged in a school feeding program with the World Food Program. Children reported that this process shifted their perception from merely service recipients to right-holders who can set indicators for the access and the quality of public services. In **South Sudan**, SC and our partners engaged children and communities in service assessment within 20 selected schools—10 in Bor and 10 in Rumbek. Both children and adults participated in dialogue meetings with duty-bearers and agreed on action points. As of the end of 2023, 14 out of 28 of the action points had been implemented by line ministries of Education and Gender, as well as local authorities, and include the construction of additional classrooms, drilling of water points, construction of latrines and delivery of textbooks. In **Niger**, SC and partners implemented CCSA pilots in 8 communities, 4 in Zinder and 4 in Diffa. These pilots made it possible to build the capacities of the authorities, communities, and children on children's participation in decision-making, to initiate dialogue between the stakeholders and to develop action plans. While the aim of the pilots was merely to explore the utility of the approach in the Nigerien context, some of the results are already impressive, such as in Takara where the inspectorate added a teacher to the school, in Agangaraou where the government and the community set up a communal school canteen (more than 700kg of staple food already mobilised by 2023) and in Doungou, where the town councils repaired the roofs of the classrooms. In **Colombia**, SC advocated for and supported the establishment of six government-owned "children's participation tables" whereby children identify and suggest solutions to pressing issues (including mental health, intra-family violence, school transportation, bullying, environment). Together with the ICBF (the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare) SC also supported the establishment of a participation table for children and adolescents with disabilities in Cúcuta, as well as affirmative action and accommodations to increase the participation of children with disabilities in Ocaña and El Carmen.

Child Rights and Business

SC advocated for and supported eight private sector



Child Parliamentarian addresses the house in Malawi.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

companies in Malawi to integrate children's rights into their respective policies, statements, codes of conduct, annual plans and annual budgets. To this end, SC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with five private companies by 2023: The Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (ESCOM), Southern Region Water Board (SRWB), Telecom Networks Malawi (TNM), Sugar Cane Growers Association of Malawi (SUGAM) and RAB Processors.

Outcome 3.3: Strengthened government institutions implement children's rights

3.3.1 # of policies or legislative change to institutionalize children's rights that has been adopted with support of Save the Children

Governments are the main duty bearers responsible for implementing the UNCRC, and this requires laws and policies that translate the UNCRC commitments into a national framework for the realization of children's rights, sufficient budget to implement these, and robust public institutions that have the necessary capacities and competence.

Laws and Policies

With continued advocacy and lobbying, by the endline, the programme has influenced several policy and legislative changes that improve children's lives. SC has advocated with and supported the Government of Malawi to develop and launch the National Child Participation Guidelines and its related National Child Participation Strategy in the country. This policy change has prompted the Government and development partners to scale up the implementation of Children's Parliaments across the country, from three districts out of 28 in 2019 to 23 in 2023. The programme supported the Ministry of Gender Community Development and Social Welfare to develop the Children's Parliament Guidelines which will be providing standardized operating procedures to all stakeholders that implement Children's Parliament. In Nepal, SC supported 103 child related laws, policies and strategies which were endorsed by governments at different levels: 96 from local governments, 3 from provincial governments and 4 from federal government. These laws and policies take various forms, such as policies, acts, regulations, strategies, strategy and plan, procedures, and guidelines and cover various themes including Education, Child Protection, Health and

Humanitarian. In **Colombia**, SC and partner advocacy contributed towards the approval of the Law against physical punishment in 2021. In 2022 the declaration of Safe Schools was signed and ratified, and in September 2023 the state Policy for holistic skills development of children and adolescents was approved by Congress. This Law, approved unanimously in the first instance, aims at improving the coordination within the different State entities that have different responsibilities for children's rights in the country. In **Guatemala**, SC and partners were successful in establishing and supporting a Municipal Children's Commission in two municipalities, and in securing the approval of two municipal public policies on the comprehensive rights and protection of children in Nebaj and Jocotán. In Nebaj this is a new public policy, while in Jocotán SC strengthened the implementation of the public policy approved during the previous project and its update in 2023. SC and CSOs in **Somalia** advocated for transformations in key policies and legislative reforms: For example, in 2019 the Somali government officially ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), making it a binding law and demonstrating the government's commitment to upholding its provisions. As a result, the Federal Government took the initiative to establish a National Disability Agency and, supported by SC and partners, enhance two critical legislative frameworks in Somalia: The National Disability Bill and the National Child Rights Bill. In **Uganda**, SC, along with other INGOs and CSOs, influenced the passing and enactment of the Prevention and Prohibition of Human Sacrifice Act that was ascended to by the President in 2020. The law provides extra measures to curb the increasing cases of child ritual murders that were prevalent in many parts of the country. SC also supported the development and roll out of implementation process of the National Child Policy that was formulated and approved by government with technical input from many actors, including SC. In South Sudan, SC supported the government in launching the earlier approved National Plan of Action for Children in April 2022.

Public Investment in Children

The programme engaged in advocacy to increase the amount of budget that governments set aside for implementation of child rights in several countries. In **Nepal**, "A budget for children analysis" shows 6% of total government budget was allocated for children at the beginning of project. At the local levels, this figure increased to 9.50% of total budget at mid-term and significantly increased to 22.66% as shown in endline. The programme in **Malawi** has contributed to an improvement in the government's resourcing of UNCRC/ACRWC Concluding Observations (containing recommendations), with 85 out of 153 fully resourced. Specific examples include the allocation of US\$ 110,000 for the establishment of

National Children's Commission in the 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 national budget respectively. In keeping with the recommendation to increase the allocation to the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare, the government increased its allocation from US\$37.3 million in the 2020/2021 national budget to US\$48.2 million in the 2021/2022 national budget. In **Guatemala**, SC and ICEFI carried out yearly assessments of national and municipal plans and budgets and used these to encourage a greater allocation of public funds to child rights. Through advocacy efforts, the project played a role in achieving significant increases. For instance, tax revenue rose from Q58,835.6 million in 2018 to Q77,627.4 million in 2023, representing a 32% increase. Similarly, comparing public investment in children to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), there was an 10% increase from 2018 to 2023. However, up to 78% of this amount is allocated to the right to education (though still inadequate), leaving the remaining 22% to cover all other rights.

Strengthening Governments

To ensure governments uphold their child rights commitments, the programme strengthened government capacities. In **Colombia**, SC provided capacity-building to officials from the 6 municipal administrations on the topics of education, protection, governance, and advocacy. This contributed to the achievement of child rights goals in municipal development plans and to ensuring that public officials were trained in processes like public accountability regarding their development plans concerning child rights. In **Nepal**, SC supported the local governments to amend local level policies to include provisions for children's representation in government structures including Local Child Rights Committee, Ward Child Rights Committee, CFLG committee, Health Facilities Operation and Management Committee and School Management Committee. SC also supported children to participate during local level planning process where they present their pre-identified issues from child assemblies. Through such policies for children's representation, formation platforms and capacity building at local level, SC contributed to increase children's representation in government bodies.

National Human Rights Institutions

One important public institution that the CRG programme has supported in several countries are the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). Between 2019 and 2020, the **Myanmar** National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) made some positive changes towards the advancement of child rights including regular quarterly meetings with CSOs, trainings with the government officials and grassroot level CSOs, monitoring the situation of children in detention centres and making recom-

mendations to the respective ministries based on the findings, investigating and responding rapidly to children's cases, and analysing child rights bill and sending recommendations to the parliament. The advocacy and constructive engagement of civil society enabled these achievements. However, the Commission had been silent and invisible since the military takeover in 2021, and SC had suspended all engagement with the MNHRC. In **Mozambique**, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) made significant progress in appointing a child focused Commissioner. SC co-organized child rights round tables with NHRC, involving duty bearers and civil society, and also supported field missions for NHRC to all provinces to monitor the realisation of child rights. However, the NHRC is perceived as lacking transparency and openness as political parties at the National Parliament are represented in the Commission. In Palestine SC has supported the Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR), among other things, to conduct a child rights audit of its work and develop a strategy and action plan for its child rights work. As a result, ICHR received 947 cases related to child rights in the past 4 years and followed them up with the relevant authorities. 70-80% of these cases were filed by children themselves. In **Malawi**, SC and our partners contributed to the establishment of the National Children's Commission (NCC) following the Act of Parliament No 12 of 2019. The NCC will play a crucial role in advising the Government on matters relating to the rights and welfare of Children, promoting multi-sectoral coordination and cooperation among stakeholders providing child related services and monitoring allocation of resources and implementation of child sensitive budgets by Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies. Also in **Malawi**, SC and our partners have contributed to children's access to justice by supporting the Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC) in investigating and providing remedial measures to 263 children (86 boys, 177 girls) across the country.

As a follow-up to regional NHRI conferences held in 2017 and 2018, SC and the **Malawi** Human Rights Commission hosted a 4-day conference of NRHIs from Mozambique, Eswatini and Malawi in July 2023. It was aimed at providing a forum where NRHIs can share their experiences and learn from successes and challenges in working to promote children's rights. Preparations for the conference was a collaborative effort between SC COs in **Malawi** and **Mozambique**.

Strengthening Data, Statistics and Analytical Study on Children

Recognizing that relevant and sufficient data on children is an essential part of implementation of child rights, the CRG programme in several countries worked towards providing such data, often in close cooperation with the national statistics body. In **Guatemala**, SC's partners CIPRODENI (Guatemala Child Rights Observatory) and ICEFI (Central American

Institute for Fiscal Studies) have maintained websites (observatories) with information on, respectively, the realisation of child rights and on public investment in children. Both partners have collected information from official sources, which they have analysed and published in user-friendly formats. At least 15 national media outlets consult the websites and refer to them in their media coverage. In **Mozambique**, the number of government institutions providing regular information on child rights tripled between 2019 and 2023: At the start of the programme in 2019, there were 6 public institutions with a duty to share relevant information about child rights (MGCAS, DAFMVV-PRM, MINEDH, MISAU, MINJACR and NHRC/CNDH) of which 2 were sharing information (MGCAS and MISAU). At the end of the programme, there was significant progress and a restructuring of government so that from 6 institutions with the duty to publish there are now 8, and from 2 publishing information there are now 7.



Reflections about sustainability – Issue 3

The work done under CRG programming focuses on strengthening civil society, including children, so that they are in a better position to demand and monitor child rights, and in a position where they can in the future function independently without SC support. This work ensures that there will be a strong civil society to continue the work done within the programme. Furthermore, adoption and implementation of child right's policies and laws, as well as strengthening of public institutions making them robust, ensure that results continue past the programme's duration and that children outside of the programme's intervention areas benefit.



Disability Inclusion in Education- Nepal.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

2. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Inclusion of children with disabilities

The programme name *Leaving no child behind* indicates a strong commitment to reaching the most marginalized children. During the implementation period, the programme has seen some significant results for children with disabilities and impact on society level.

Strong increase in enrolment of children with disabilities in schools

Despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and a global regression in school attendance, there is evidence showing a strong increase in the enrolment of children with disabilities across most of

the programme countries. After the pandemic, all implementing countries carried out extensive back to school campaigns to regain the losses seen in enrolment during and after the pandemic, particularly targeting girls and children with disabilities. Since midterm, the enrolment has seen a steady increase in most countries, reaching record-high numbers in some of them. Actual numbers of children with disabilities in brackets.

95% increase in Malawi (BL: 8,063 -> EL: 15,665)
 136% increase in Mozambique (BL: 1,172 -> EL: 2,770)
 298% increase in Somalia (BL: 289 -> EL: 1,008)
 44% increase in South Sudan (BL: 171 -> EL: 240)
 128% increase in Niger (BL: 332 -> EL: 760)
 330% increase in Guatemala (BL: 23 -> EL: 99)

Extensive awareness, advocacy campaigns and sensitization of parents and communities are thought to have contributed to the strong increase in enrolment of children with disabilities. In **Somalia**, data revealed that there has been a particularly strong increase in the enrolment of girls with disabilities, from 126 girls at baseline to 502 girls at endline, or an equivalent increase of 298%. The increase in the district level numbers for Karkar (291%), Nugal (522%) and Galgadud (272%) confirms that the programme is making a considerable impact for children with disabilities' right to education, particularly girls. Another aspect that can explain parts of the strong enrolment numbers in Somalia is how the programme has targeted Quranic schools and religious leaders in the implementing areas for sensitisation and awareness raising. The religious leaders have been trained on child rights and disability inclusion. Some of them have later become champions for the rights of children with disabilities within their mosques and communities. Evidence also shows a reduction in corporal punishment since Quranic teachers received training and started adopting alternative disciplinary methods.

Despite the positive trends in enrolment for children with disabilities, still, too many children with disabilities are out-of-school and those that make it to school have less learning outcomes compared to non-disabled children. A continued focus on awareness raising and dialog with care givers, teacher training, identification, holistic approach in enrolment campaigns, improved learning outcomes and more inclusive learning environments are crucial for future programmes.

Stronger partnerships have been central to the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme. Partnering with the rights holders, the representative Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), as well as the duty bearers, through various government entities at different levels, has been key to the programme and its ability to achieve impact and lasting change in the communities and at the national level. There are clear indications that partnerships with OPDs are gradually increasing in number and strength. Additionally, OPDs are becoming more effective advocates and are assuming greater leadership roles within the civil society space. During the period, the programme has worked closely with national level umbrella OPDs in countries such as Niger (FNPH), Somalia (SODEN, SDN, PDON), Mozambique (FAMOD), Uganda (NUDIPU), Nepal (NFDN) or through other types of national level working groups/networks, as in the case of Myanmar (NCRWG, Doh Ah Tu) or governmental entities such as in Guatemala (DIGEEESP).

Impact on national and international policy and legal frameworks: during the implementation period, the programme contributed to the ratification of the UN CRPD in both Somalia and South Sudan, which is an important step towards in the

fulfilment of rights for persons with disabilities in the two countries.

In **South Sudan**, Save the Children took an active part in the network of national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and played a pivotal role in submitting a supplementary report on the UN CRC and the UPR. The programme contributed to mainstreaming disability inclusion in the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) and the advocacy work, which led to the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) on 24 February 2023.

In **Mozambique**, SC together with the Child Rights platform (3R) and FAMOD produced a child informed UPR supplementary report in October 2020 that was submitted to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). In early 2024, the Parliament finally approved the Adoption of the Bill of Rights of People with Disability (Disability law), a process that has been ongoing since 2014. The *Leaving No Child Behind* programme has supported FAMOD to take the lead and coordinate the national advocacy work towards the law's approval.

In **Somalia**, SC provided empowering capacity-building and technical support, to OPDs like the Somali Disability Network (SDN) and the Puntland Disability Organization Network (PDON), which enabled them to engage in and advocate towards the review process of the National Disability Bill. These organizations played a crucial role in advocating for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities and ensured that the proposed legislation adequately addressed the needs and concerns of persons with disabilities.

Building capacity on collection of disability disaggregated data: good data is a prerequisite for the inclusion of children with disabilities and the fulfilment of rights. It was early realized that to build a solid baseline and measure the programme's results, the programme needed to build capacity of country offices in data collection and specifically in administering the Washington Group Questions (WGQs). A comprehensive training package for online delivery was developed in 2020 and rolled out to eight country offices in the following years. The training resulted in increased understanding about disability inclusion in general, as well as increased capacity among country office and partner staff to collect, analyse and utilize disability data at baseline, mid-term and endline, which was critical for measuring the programme's deliverables towards children with disabilities.

Synergies between TOFI and Norad: SC has implemented the Together for Inclusion (TOFI) programme in partnership with OPDs and NGOs in **Somalia, Uganda and Mozambique** since 2019. The two programmes have been implemented in parallel, sometimes in the same areas and schools. This has allowed them to complement each other, add



Girls in Nepal.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

value to and reinforce each other's interventions. In Somalia and Mozambique, the two programmes have jointly supported a Disability Inclusion Technical Specialist position at the country offices which has resulted in more inclusive programmes and increased knowledge among staff. Joint or coordinated enrolment campaigns have resulted in record-high increase in enrolment of children with disabilities. In Somalia, there has been a particularly strong increase in the enrolment of children with disabilities in school in the two districts where both TOFI and Norad are implemented, 333% increase in Karkar and 433% increase in Nugal.



Lessons learned and sustainability

Some country programmes have developed innovative ways or modalities for sharing experiences and best practices for the inclusion of children with disabilities in school. In **Mozambique**, WhatsApp has been used to create an online space for sharing best practices on teaching children with disabilities for teachers that have completed training on inclusive education. In **Colombia**, WhatsApp has been used to gather groups of caregivers of children with disabilities to share challenges, experiences, tips, and best practices.

Based on the experiences from programme implementation a number of learning points have been made. Continue focusing on improved learning

outcome, particularly for children with disabilities, as this group is underperforming across all countries. Future programmes need to look beyond the education sector, remove barriers and apply enablers across all thematic areas. Based on what the programme has achieved throughout the period, it's clear that collaboration, partnerships and capacity building of representative and legitimate OPDs is a prerequisite for fulfilment of rights and future sustainability.

Gender Equality and contribution to resolution 1325

The *Leave No Child Behind* programme has contributed to the advancement of gender equality in the local communities where we work. It has addressed systemic barriers to equal participation and fostered an environment that is more supportive of the empowerment of women and girls. It has challenged and contributed to change societal norms that limit the rights and opportunities of those facing gender discrimination, focusing on access to education, protection from gender-based violence, including child marriage and teenage pregnancies²³ and ensuring participation in child clubs and in the communities.

Gender mainstreaming

An external gender review of the Norad portfolio from 2023 holds that "...SCN and the COs implementing the Norad Framework Agreement 2019-

23) For more information on this work, refer to Issue 2.

2023 have made impressive strides toward the integration of gender equality considerations into programming. Country offices have made substantial headway in designing programmes that strive to be at least gender sensitive and gender transformative". Of the 12 country programmes within the current Norad Framework Agreement, nine (75%) met the criteria to be considered gender transformative or gender sensitive, compared with gender reviews in 2016, 2017 and 2018 where around 20% of the proposals were gender transformative or gender sensitive.

All COs now systematically collect gender disaggregated data and have a strong focus on equal participation among girls and boys, women and men. According to the gender review most COs were also able to provide "...clear examples of how they had used gender disaggregated data to inform changes to programming or implementation approaches". This has contributed to the identification of inequalities and put in place measures to course correct and ensure equal participation for girls and boys during the lifespan of the programme.

The gender review also found that the analysis of sex disaggregated data has led to changes in how gender equality is understood within some COs. Staff in **Mozambique**, **Myanmar**, and **Uganda** shared examples of how disaggregated data had highlighted specific examples where boys and men, rather than girls and women, appeared to be at a disadvantage, challenging common ideas that a focus on gender equals a focus on girls and women.

More girls in school and gender sensitive education: In many countries, the *Leave No Child Behind* programme has contributed to increased enrollment and retention in schools for girls, recognizing that education is a critical pathway to gender equality. In **South Sudan**, **Somalia**, **Uganda** and **Malawi**, a number of school-related interventions such as the establishment of girl-friendly spaces, gender segregated latrines, menstrual hygiene management kits and life skills trainings have provided crucial support for girls. In combination with community dialogue and parent support groups, engaging and mentoring female role models and deliberately increasing the number of female teachers, this has led to reduced absenteeism and increased girls' enrolment and retention in school. In one region in Somalia girls' enrollment increased by 134%, while boys' enrollment increased by 115% during the programme period.

Many COs have also implemented measures to improve gender equality through the qualitative content within the educational space. In **Colombia** efforts to promote gender equality in education have involved gender-responsive pedagogy and adapting the curriculum to avoid replicating stereotypical perspectives on gender. Teachers, principals, parents, caregivers, and students have discussed exclusion, discrimination, stereotypes, new masculinities, and

sexual orientation. In **Myanmar** and **Lebanon** a gender lens was applied when reviewing and designing learning materials, resulting in the development of materials that do not reinforce gender stereotypes. Instead, they created images and examples that break gender biases and display female role models. Field observations revealed improved classroom performance due to these changes.

Involving men and boys: an important achievement we have seen in the majority of the COs is linked to involving men and boys. During the programme period most of the country offices have experienced challenges reaching male caregivers. Subsequently, a number of initiatives have been tested, evaluated and found to be crucial in many different contexts. In **Malawi**, The REAL father's approach has contributed to breaking stereotypes by challenging societal norms. When fathers started to actively participate in caregiving activities, the perception that certain roles and responsibilities are solely the domain of women was challenged and the men took greater responsibility for their daughters' upbringing and wellbeing. Also in **Lebanon** very few male caregivers were initially involved in parenting sessions. During the programme period men were therefore deliberately targeted and gradually became involved, engaged and supportive fathers. Similarly, in **Colombia**, there was low attendance of men in parenting sessions. This mirrored cultural gender roles in the area but was also a result of the sessions being scheduled at times that were good for women and safe for the project team but when men were generally working. To reach male caregivers the team sought out alternative strategies, such as the creation of guides and booklets for home distribution, the use of WhatsApp calls, holding sessions on Sundays as well as purchasing a smartphone and speakers to broadcast sessions in a public space during times men could attend. Moreover, in **Colombia**, former male FARC-guerrilla combatants who were part of groups discussing gender equality issues, pointed out that these sessions allowed them to recognize and identify past and present violent practices and reflect on the roles of girls, women, boys and men in their community. This has contributed to building safer and more gender equitable relations within the communities.

A gender perspective in our child rights governance work: Many COs, including **Nepal**, **Uganda** and **South Sudan**, have been mindful of including girls in their CRG interventions, equipping them with knowledge and platforms to advocate for their rights and influence policy changes that support gender equality. In **Lebanon** girls, who have historically faced barriers to such engagement, have been empowered to participate in public forums and consultations. This has provided them with the opportunity to voice their concerns and actively contribute to discussions on issues affecting their lives. Children in the CRG programme in Lebanon chose to address

and conduct participatory action research on the issue of child marriage, which affects many girls in the community. This way the CRG interventions have ensured that girls' specific needs and rights are considered in local and national agendas, having a positive effect on society by promoting gender equality and empowering girls.



Lessons learned and reflections on sustainability

The sustainability of gender equality and girls' rights programming is multifaceted and requires a concerted effort from many stakeholders. By addressing the educational, economic, legal, and social dimensions of gender inequality, the Leave No Child Behind programme has laid the groundwork for sustainable empowerment of girls and women. In most of the countries, however, there are still inherent deeply rooted cultural norms among communities which impede the development and empowerment of girls. Therefore, while significant progress has been made, continued attention to these areas is necessary to ensure that the achievements are not only preserved but also built upon in the future. Key lessons learned are:

- Continuous investment in girls' education needs to be maintained and scaled up to ensure that girls continue to access quality education.
- Sustainable change in gender norms and the empowerment of girls often hinge on the degree of community ownership and participation. Programs that have successfully engaged community leaders, parents, and boys, have seen more enduring shifts in attitudes and behaviors.
- The active involvement of men and boys in gender equality efforts is vital for challenging and changing patriarchal norms.
- Building strong partnerships with and strengthen the capacity of government entities and civil society organizations including women's rights organisations can help sustain efforts in gender equality and girls' empowerment and ensures that local entities can lead gender equality initiatives.
- Empowering young people, especially girls, to take on leadership roles ensures that the next generation continues to advocate for their rights and gender equality.
- The integration of gender-responsive policies into national frameworks is a significant step toward sustainability. These policies must be actively implemented and monitored to ensure they translate into long-term societal change.

The environment and vulnerability to climate change

The extent and magnitude of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss is an urgent and systemic threat to children's rights globally, and its effects were felt by children in all the countries during the programme implementation period. In **Guatemala**, the tropical storms Eta, Lota and Pilar, caused flooding and landslides, disrupting communication routs and children's education. In **Somalia** many of the child protection cases in the Hirran region were attributed to climate-induced displacements. In **Palestine** the ongoing war has led to a significant environmental destruction, including loss of trees and farmland, and accumulation of hazardous debris and materials from bombings. This further worsens humanitarian needs and poses long-term risks for children and their families.

One of SCNs four strategic priorities for 2022-24 is to protect children against the effects of climate change and environmental destruction and support their fight against it. Under the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme we have addressed this commitment through awareness raising, disaster risk reduction (DRR), promoting and enabling child participation, establishing new partnerships, and improving the sustainability of our operations.

Awareness and DRR: We strengthened disaster resilience through training sessions, development of educational materials and risk-informed school plans, the establishment of disaster management committees, disaster preparedness drills and the implementation of measures to create safer learning environments. We have been largely basing the work on SC's Safe Schools programmatic approach. In **Mozambique**, 61 School Risk and Disaster Management Committees were formed and trained, along with training for the school community on safe schools' measures and actions. This proved effective, as members gained knowledge, awareness, and leadership skills to mitigate risks for children in and out of school. In **Somalia**, all the schools supported through the Norad programme have a functional risk-informed school improvement plan in place, which was developed based on participatory risk assessment and planning processes involving the community, school management and children. In **Nepal**, we focused on improving schools' infrastructure and disaster readiness, these measures aimed to ensure education continuity and protect lives in the face of climate and geophysical induced extreme events.

Child Participation: Children have made historic contributions to human rights and environmental protection and have been at the forefront of the climate and environmental movement. However, adults and authorities often dismiss children's initiatives. The *Leaving No Child Behind* programme has



A school in Southern Somalia hit by flood water.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

supported meaningful child participation in the fight against climate change and environmental destruction. In **South Sudan**, we promoted child participation and improving the government's perception of it, which led to the government approaching SC for support in facilitating for children's participation at the UN climate negotiations (COP28). In **Myanmar**, we implemented Green Generation, a project-based educational approach for environmental education which we have developed together with WWF. Through this, we distributed 1,186 Green Generation learning kits on locally relevant environmental issues and the impact of climate change. Green Generation Clubs were formed and run by volunteers, and 849 children (G:407/B: 442) in Magwe and 1067 children (G:547/B: 520) in Kayah took part in activities such as planting trees, implementing local clean-up campaigns, and maintaining a clean environment in their daily lives. Further, in **Myanmar** and **Niger**, we facilitated inputs from children to the draft to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) General Comment 26 on children's rights and the environment. In **Lebanon**, the children involved in our global campaign, Generation Hope, determined that the effort should focus on campaigning for the right to education, and took the forefront of this campaign to discuss the issue, and promote it through billboards, podcasts, and social media posts.

Partnerships: As part of our commitment to localisation we have partnered with local organisations. In **Lebanon**, SC partnered with Development for People and Nature Association (DPNA) to build a child-friendly climate change toolkit aimed at providing resources to caregivers, teachers, and CSOs on climate change impacts on child rights. Children's feedback was very positive, and they requested additional sessions. In **Nepal**, the partnership with the Network of Youths Advocating for Climate Actions (NYCA) led to giving more space to youth groups, including the "My Green and Clean School" campaign, led by youth with disabilities, which sub-

stantially contributed to promoting gardens in public schools. In **Niger**, we partnered with the Nigerien Federation of Rural Parents (FNPH) who took the initiative to support seasonal feeding in schools with the highest number of children with disabilities, thus avoiding a mass drop-out of this group being particular at risk in dry seasons.

Advocacy: Children are paving the way towards a fairer, greener future by speaking up and demanding their needs and rights, so we have actively supported them in their advocacy, while we urge Governments to respect children's right to a healthy, clean, and sustainable environment. We have promoted and supported children's voices and priorities during the COP 2019-23. In 2022 the government of **Malawi** provided space for children within the country's delegation for the first time, and in 2023 we joined the Colombian state's stand at COP28 as a panellist. In **Colombia** SC was also asked by the Government to contribute to the development of child-friendly methodologies to promote children's participation in the national strategy "Peace and Climate Change Strategy" in 2024.



Lessons learned and sustainability

Sustainability of our operations: SCN supported SC in the development of a baseline for CO2 emissions in 2019 to form the basis for country specific mitigation plans. All our country offices should now have a mitigation plan in place and are implementing initiatives for increasing sustainability. For example, reducing digital footprint, improved and reduced material use, improved waste management and using environment as criteria on selecting suppliers. Furthermore, sustainability played a pivotal role when SCN relocated its offices to an eco-friendly, all-wood building, with repurposed interior (60%). In

2020, we achieved the Eco-Lighthouse certification (Miljøfyrtårn), and since 2019 we have significantly reduced air travel by 48% and paper usage by 63%. In 2023 SC introduced a mandatory environmental and social screening tool to limit potential negative impacts for all new projects.

Way forward: During this reporting period, SCN has prioritised to further develop our knowledge, expertise, and programming responding to climate change and environmental destruction. During 2022-23, SCN invested 11,7 MNOK from our own flexible funding, in a climate change programme initiative which established eight climate and environment pilot projects across all regions. The experiences and learning from this initiative, as well as learning from the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme, have successfully been incorporated in “climate and environment” as a new impact area for the new Norad agreement 2024-28. The environmental education Green Generation model has been adapted from Myanmar’s material and piloted in **Guatemala** (Spanish) and **Palestine** (Arabic) and is now incorporated in the new agreement in

these countries, as well as in Lebanon and Syria. In **Mozambique**, the Youth and Children Climate Action (YCAC), a youth organisation funded and technically supported by the pilot, is now a partner for the new agreement. In **Colombia**, we adapted and piloted a community climate assessment and planning tool with indigenous population, which will be used within schools in the Norad programme and in Guatemala. Likewise, in **Myanmar**, learnings from this framework period showed a need to incorporate environmental and climate change considerations into child protection case management as crucial to effectively safeguard children's well-being in the face of climate-induced hazards and disruptions. For this, we will focus on strengthening the capacity of case workers within the topic during 2024-28.

Partnerships and civil society

| Country | Total nr. partners | Type of partner | | Sub-categories LCSOs partners | | | | Total nr of LCSO partners strengthened |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|--|
| | | Govern. | Total LCSO partners reached | DPOs or Inclusion Partner | Universities/Educ. Institutions | Active Partners as of Dec 2023* | | |
| Colombia | 19 | 5 | 14 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 9 | |
| Guatemala | 13 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | |
| Lebanon | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | |
| oPt | 9 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | |
| Myanmar | 7 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | |
| Nepal | 16 | 2 | 14 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | |
| Malawi | 13 | 3 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 7 | |
| Mozambique | 20 | 6 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 11 | |
| Niger | 9 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | |
| Somalia | 10 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | |
| South Sudan | 11 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | |
| Uganda | 18 | 2 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | |
| Cambodia** | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | |
| Ethiopia** | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | |
| Nicaragua** | 7 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | |
| Zimbabwe** | 13 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | |
| Grand Total | 181 | 44 | 137 | 10 | 8 | 0 | 96 | |

*All contracts with partners under the “Leaving no child behind” programme were terminated by the end of December 2023. Some partnerships will be continued in the new framework period 2024-28.

** Countries phased out by 2021.

For Save the Children, partnering with and strengthening Local Civil Society Organisations (LCSOs) is not only essential to achieve our programmatic goals, but is also one of the main pillars of our Theory of Change and our sustainability strategy: A strong civil society can hold the States to account for delivering on their commitments to children as laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and deliver initiatives for children after donor support has phased out. In parallel, we partner with government institutions to strengthen the capacity and willingness of duty bearers to provide quality services to the children. To achieve the goals of the 2019-2023 Leave No One Behind framework, SCI has been collaborating with 181 partners across the 16 intervention countries. Out of this, 137 are LCSOs and 44 are government entities, with which we collaborate to achieve mutual strategic objectives. Furthermore, 8 of the LCSO partners are universities or educational institutions, and 10 are either Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) or disability focused organizations.

By 2023, SC had supported 96 of our LCSO partners to strengthen their operational, technical, fundraising and advocacy capacities, reaching 86% of capacity milestones. SC and partners have jointly identified these milestones and developed and implemented capacity building plans targeted to the need of each partner. As per SC's localisation strategy, we have allocated an increasing amount of funding and responsibilities to the partners as the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme progressed and the milestones were reached. In the following section, we highlight some notable achievements and remaining challenges for SCI's partnerships:

An illustrative example of how our partner capacity strengthening model is put to use and contribute to long-term outcomes for children comes from **Guatemala**, where five LCSO partners received annual trainings and refreshment sessions on the programmatic issues of education, protection and child rights governance as well as the cross-cutting issues of gender equality, disability inclusion and child participation; capacity building on MEAL procedures and narrative and financial reporting; as well as support to develop and follow up routines for safeguarding, internal controls and human resources. Enabled by this capacity increase, the partner organizations will include many of the *Leaving No Child Behind* project's activities in their future plans and proposals, and have reached out to donor agencies to secure funding independently of SCI. Finally, equipped with child rights knowledge and organisational capacity, the partners and SCI have jointly supported the establishment of three child-led organisations: Red de Triunfadores en Acción – Ixil, Nebaj; Organización Juvenil Escobillal and the Organización Juvenil la Cuestona, both from Jocotán, Chortí. Together, we delivered a participatory training series for the child and youth members on children's rights, communi-

cation, public investment in children, leadership and advocacy. The children have already been able to participate in civic engagement spaces and interact with duty-bearers in their regions.

To highlight the added value of working together with partners, we draw on SCI **Somalia's** experience of developing and submitting supplementary civil society reports to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. With support from SCI, Somali LCSOs with complementary expertise and resources came together to collaborate, fostering a collective sense of purpose and shared ownership. Each partner contributed their different strengths, knowledge, networks, and resources. For instance, the partnership with organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) played a significant role in advocating for the development of policies and legal frameworks for children with disabilities. This approach ensured that interventions were relevant to children in the country, and the main role of SCI was to be a convener. CSOs and children raised seven key child rights issues, including the lack of protective legislative mechanisms, children affected by armed conflict, budgeting, child participation and girls' rights. The CRC Committee acknowledged and addressed all the seven issues, discussing them during the State party review meeting.

On the other hand, in **Myanmar**, shrinking civic space under the current political context has had a negative impact on SCI's ability to sustain our partnerships. Following the coup d'état in 2021, monthly partner meetings were suspended or moved online due to curfews; roadblocks preventing movement across the country; and severe legislative restrictions on INGOs and LCSOs affiliated with them made several partners discontinue their relationship with SC. However, in response to this crisis, some of the local partners have been able to continue implementation in their communities, working with community-based facilitators and showing both an interest in and capacity for increased leadership. Without the partnerships, the disruptions caused to children and communities by the coup would have been much greater, as the partners were able to ensure that they were supported also under difficult circumstances.

However, SC continues to work on addressing challenges in our partnership models and routines. To this end, we commission an annual Keystone Partnership Feedback Survey shared with all our partners. The survey covers seven areas – financial support, non-financial support, administration and finalising the agreement, relationship and communication, monitoring and reporting, understanding and learning and Covid-19 experience – and results show a high and improving degree of satisfaction with SC as a partner, but with important caveats such as the fact that up to one fourth of all partners do not feel like an "equal partner". This is not only a challenge to our long-term localisation ambitions, but also

our short-term goals. For example, this factor could have contributed towards the limited ownership of the capacity strengthening plans by the LCSO partners in Malawi, where SCI had identified the partners', milestones mostly based on the pre-award assessments and included them in compliance and monitoring visits. This has been an important lesson learned from this framework agreement and we will be working collaboratively to achieve a step-change towards equitable partnerships, through a culture change in how SCI works, increased funding to local actors, and an effort to reduce and simplify compliance requirements.

Child Participation

Children's right to express themselves and to influence decisions that affect their lives is embedded in article 12 in the CRC, as well as being one of its four general principles. As a child rights organization, Save the Children is obliged to listen to, and learn from children in all contexts and situations. Children's insights about the activities they are a part of, provide SC and partner organisations with valuable information about the extent to which our interven-

tions succeed in reaching and including all children, and children with disabilities and marginalised groups in particular. To this end, SC in many countries has established child advisory boards, in which children participate and influence SC's internal decision-making bodies, based on their experiences from SC activities, including from *Leaving No Child Behind*.

Following up on the evaluation of Save the Children's work with child participation, during this five-year programme period, we've had a systematic focus on mainstreaming meaningful participation throughout the different stages of project cycles.²⁶ Child participation is considered a key working principle, cutting across thematic and geographical areas in all programmes in the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme. This has been practiced at various levels; on a day-to-day basis when SC staff and partner staff interact with and learn from children; through child-friendly reporting and feedback mechanisms; and in processes where we systematically seek children's insights and experiences, such as consultations with children and children's participation in the assessments of risks, both in terms of natural hazards, school environment, and violent conflict. This way, SC, partners and other decision makers learn from children's own perceptions of risks, and the children learn more about their rights, about strategies for



Children discussing child rights issues in Lebanon.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

26) https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/child_participation_review_-_main_report.pdf/

mitigation and protection, and about the child protection mechanisms and safeguarding measures in place in their communities.

During these 5 years of implementation, we have witnessed several rapid and dramatic ruptures in the societies and countries where we work, the most notable of course being the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the consequential severe implications on the situation for children's rights around the world. As schools, and most community- and public spaces were shut down or sought transferred to digital arenas, children all over the world experienced severe limitations on their possibilities to exercise their rights to express themselves and to influence decision making. For SC, to truly understand the impacts, the contextual differences, and to respond to these in ways that were meaningful, safe and relevant for the children themselves, it was more important than ever to ensure that we listened to the children, so that we could adjust programmes and activities, and advocate for decision makers to adopt appropriate responses. In all countries, SC contributed with setting up spaces for children to share experiences from school closures and isolation, such as home schooling, digital communication, and anxiety and fear related to the spread of the virus. One example is **South Sudan** where children told how girls and boys were impacted differently by the restrictions and school closures and how it has led to an increase of child marriages, insights that contributed to the government's decision to reopening the schools, allowing children and youth to sit their final exams.

Of the many learnings from these times, children's insights on their use of technology and digital spaces for participation and information sharing, including all the challenges and inequalities related to access to these spaces, have had massive impact on both SC and local and national authorities (see "Protect a Generation" SC's large global report of children's experiences, in which all countries under the programme participated).²⁷

However, the current worldwide tendency of a gradually shrinking civic space is not to be attributed to the outbreak and handling of the Covid-19 pandemic alone. During the implementation of this programme, several countries have seen abrupt and violent change of regimes, dramatically affecting the everyday life and liberties of children. However, these sudden ruptures have served to illustrate the importance of flexible programming and how the long term engagement with and for children in the communities have strengthened their resilience- In **Myanmar**, children were supported to find safe ways to continue their social and political engagement and clubs, and civil society organisations having worked with SC for many years, have shown impressive and

innovative ways to overcoming obstacles presented by the political change. For example, there has been established private online children's networks, so they could continue to engage with each other and receive information and trainings to support their advocacy. Similarly, the military coup in **Niger** led to changes and challenges as to how children can engage with local and national decision makers. However, based on children's own feedback of how they perceive their participation, we see that they keep practicing the skills and competencies in civic engagement, which is incredibly valuable, independent of the type of regime in their country. Most recently, with the war in Gaza. Supported by SC's partner organisation, children in the Palestinian child council in the **West Bank** show great courage and motivation to continue to engage for children's rights, using their skills and the little spaces available, to express their solidarity with the children in Gaza, and to share opinions with local and international decision makers, so that they can contribute to the changing of the horrific situation for so many children in oPt. Albeit tragic, this is also an example of how important it is for SC to continue supporting children's agency throughout crises and conflict, finding safe ways for them to understand and engage in the situation they find themselves in and contributing to ways to solve conflicts, little and small. This is for SC's a key element of how we work along the **triple Nexus** hence forward, informed by the insights from children we have worked with under *Leaving No Child Behind*.

Supporting children's own agency and activism is an important part of Save the Children's mandate as a child rights organisation, in all contexts. And in spite of, and sometimes even as a reaction to, the tendency of a shrinking civic space, worldwide, there has been a sharp increase initiatives and child- and youth-led activism. Since the beginning of this five-year programme, children's engagement in the climate crisis and children's rights to a healthy environment stands out as particularly impactful, and with *Leaving No Child Behind*, SC has had the opportunity to engage with and support many groups of children in their advocacy work at local, national and international level (see climate chapter). As SC's collaborations and support for children's own organisations and groups, is a key component of SC's participatory approach and theory of change, we constantly seek to learn from the children themselves, as to how to best support them and their initiatives. *Leaving No Child Behind* has provided SC and partner organisations with the opportunity to improve our knowledge and practices. Several of the countries, including **Colombia, Myanmar, Niger, Lebanon, Guatemala, Somalia and Mozambique** have systematically collected data on how children

27) <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/protect-generation-impact-covid-19-childrens-lives/>

perceive their own participation in the programmes, using the UN-developed “Nine Basic Requirements of Meaningful and Ethical Children’s Participation,”²⁸ which SC apply as quality standards for how we work with child participation. Children have actively participated in these studies, designing and conducting child-led research with and on their peers. **Guatemala and Lebanon** have had the opportunity to conduct a larger study over the entire programme period, and jointly the insights and analyses from the children taking part in this have provided SC and partner organisations with invaluable information and knowledge on how we facilitate, support and advocate for children’s participation at all levels, including, of course, our own programmes (see annex Lebanon and Guatemala studies). For SC, the main lessons learned from these studies include the importance of creating child friendly and inclusive environments for all children, including children with disabilities, and not to forget that children want to have fun together. Furthermore, the children are very clear about how much they enjoy being entrusted the tasks as ‘researchers’, ‘analysts’, photographers, media responsible etc, introducing them to new skills and roles, and SC staff, partner organisations, teachers and care-givers tell of how they have seen the children thrive and develop with the responsibility they have been entrusted with. With this, SC has taken a big step in strengthening how we understand and implement our quality standards for child participation, and the information and the recommendations from these studies have already informed the development of new programmes, including the Norad proposal 2024-28.

In addition to supporting children’s own initiatives and activism, the programme has served to strengthen children’s real opportunities to influence and engage in the existing decision-making structures. In collaboration with partner organisations and the children themselves, SC has contributed with analyses, advocacy trainings and workshops with key stakeholders, and contributed to opening up more and broader spaces for participation for children. This has served to build cross-generational competency and culture for what meaningful, safe and inclusive child participation means and what it requires of resources and practices. Working with adults and their understanding, is a quintessential component for ensuring that children experience their participation as safe and meaningful, and also lead to more sustainable changes. In **Malawi**, this kind of targeted activities, combined with the children’s experiences and recommendations, have contributed to the development and endorsement of the National Child Participation Guidelines and

its related National Child Participation Strategy.²⁹ In terms of strengthening children’s rights to express themselves and take part in decision making, it is very encouraging to see how our participatory practices and the structure we have supported *Leave No Children Behind* are not only well received and institutionalised, they also inspire other societal and political actors, establishing structures for participation of children of their own, independent of Save the Children. In Colombia, SC’s systematic efforts to promote and actively include children with disabilities in local and national spaces for child participation, have motivated national entities such as the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare (ICBF) to establish a Children Roundtable specifically for children with disabilities in the region (for other examples, see the CRG chapter).

Lastly, and most importantly, we see how this way of working serves to strengthen how the children see themselves and their beliefs in what they are capable of; how their sense of belonging and contribution to their community increases, and how they thrive when they experience of being met with respect, of being valued as individuals and as children. This provides not only hope, but actual capabilities and confidence, that they can contribute as agents of change in their own lives and in the lives of the children and adults in their communities. For Save the Children, this impact is invaluable.

Education technology

The second track focuses on ongoing and new pilot projects and approaches. Over the past five years we have supported or piloted education technology projects across all countries in the Norad programme. In all workstreams in track 2 we are working across humanitarian and development contexts, and it highlights that EdTech is a tool relevant in all, including nexus contexts. We see this as an advantage contributing to the sustainability of our programs, and it has enabled us to take advantages of the resulting synergies between Norad and NMFA funded programs.

In 2023 we have continued to focus our investments in how technology can support teachers professional development and supporting education institutions in utilizing data to inform policy and practice in education systems.

An area of focus for innovation and learning has been supporting teachers digitally through technology supported Teacher Learning Circles (Professional Learning Communities). To support this work a guidance note was developed in 2021 with funding

28) <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/nine-basic-requirements-meaningful-and-ethical-childrens-participation/>

29) https://malawi.savethechildren.net/sites/malawi.savethechildren.net/files/library/National_Child_Participation_Guidelines.pdf <https://malawi.savethechildren.net/sites/malawi.savethechildren.net/files/library/National%20Child%20Participation%20Strategy.pdf>



Girls in Somalia studying with help of their radio.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

from NMFA to provide pedagogical and operational considerations in humanitarian and development contexts. Many Norad countries, including **Colombia, Myanmar, Lebanon and Somalia**, have conducted all-digital or hybrid teacher learning circles in the last five years. In **Nepal**, a Virtual Community of Practice has been piloted to support school leaders and was in 2023 scaled up to several districts. In **Somalia** WhatsApp groups for teachers have been instrumental in better supporting teachers and ensuring they had better interactions with coaches and their peers, contributing to the increase of 29% to 70% of teachers meeting the minimum threshold for teachers' competency at endline. It has made it possible to support more teachers and has potential for cost efficiency. A challenge identified for sustainability of this work was the time commitment needed to do data collection and analysis of the digital groups. In 2023 a pilot was conducted to better understand how technology can support the quantification and analysis of teachers' engagement in WhatsApp groups in Somalia. The project specifically looked into what potentials and limitations artificial intelligence can provide. The pilot found OpenAi holds promise in identifying engagement, translation, and sentiment analysis.

In addition to technology supported Teacher Learning Circles, several countries have utilized E-Learning for teachers. In **Niger**, 503 teachers have completed 6 E-learning modules, considerably improving their teaching skills and increasing their motivation.

Another area of focus has been the utilization of data to inform policy and practice. In 2020 SCN with funding from Norad and NMFA established the

attendance tracking project with the aim of understanding how the regular tracking of attendance data via digital systems could inform programmatic adaptations, monitoring of those programmes, and ultimately support reduction in drop-out rates of marginalized children. In 2021 we published the Enrollment and Absence Monitoring Systems Toolkit intended to support teams looking to utilize these systems. Pilots have since been conducted in **Lebanon, Colombia, Somalia, Ethiopia and Mozambique**, utilizing Waliku, DHIS2 prototype to SEMIS app, OpenEmis, CommCare and custom-built solutions. In 2023, several of the pilots have been concluded. Data from the pilots confirm that absenteeism is a significant issue. The digitization of attendance data visualized trends for stakeholders and allows more prompt follow up. In Ethiopia the pilot showed an overall reduction in absence of 55%. The District Education Officer in one of the pilot districts attributes this change to the close follow up of data weekly by the head teacher, parents-teacher association and by the district. The data collected has the potential to tailor programmatic responses and do advocacy around emerging issues. For example, in **Colombia**, one of the issues that was identified through data collection was drop out due to climatic events. This is an issue that is not visible at the national level. A main learning from the pilots is the importance to closely collaborate with stakeholders to avoid multiple systems for data collection. In **Mozambique**, experiences from a pilot that increased teachers' attendance with support of digital tracking systems are being incorporated into a platform by the Ministry of Education.

In addition to utilizing technology to support

teachers and utilize educational data, we have also worked extensively with how technology can support students learning basic literacy and numeracy skills. This work was accelerated during school closures due to Covid-19. We have supported distance learning through radio by developing guidance on interactive radio instruction and development of educational radio programs, for example in **Guatemala** where we developed programs to provide education for indigenous populations in Ixil and Ch'orti languages. We have supported teachers communicating with students and parents through WhatsApp, for example in **Colombia** and **Lebanon**. Additionally, we have supported the utilization of technology in schools to learn basic literacy and numeracy skills, for example through continuation of Leap Learning Labs in **Somalia**. A qualitative study showed stakeholders consider this program to be relevant and effective, however the evidence on learning outcomes in terms of literacy and numeracy skills for children is mixed.

We have also invested in maintenance and support of the Improving Learning Environments Together in Emergencies (ILET) data management platform. ILET is a package designed to improve learning environments through community participation. It provides real-time analysis and visualization of data collected. In 2023 an external evaluation was conducted in **Somalia**, **South-Sudan** and **Niger**, finding ILET to be a relevant, innovative and responsive tool.³⁰ The evidence suggested ILET has successfully improved student access to quality learning and created more community engagement.

Risk Analysis

This section presents a brief analysis of the risks that materialised during the implementation of the programme and that had a high and medium impact on programme implementation. We describe the response measures adopted and their effects (refer to the Risk Matrix Annex).

Through the 5 years of implementation of the “*Leaving no child behind*” programme, multiple risks foreseen and unforeseen, internal, and external, materialized. To mention the most significant ones: Natural disasters such as droughts, hurricanes, and flooding; the Covid-19 pandemic; increase in conflict: coup d'état in Myanmar and Niger; the war in Palestine and the war in Ukraine, affecting directly and indirectly programme implementation; the Lebanon blast; global inflation and devaluation of the Norwegian Krone. All the above present a volatile world picture, requiring programmes to constantly adjust and manoeuvre to be able to deliver planned results.

RISKS THAT HAVE HINDERED RESULTS ACHIEVEMENT

Covid-19 was probably the most significant event that has had profound implication in the programme implementation and hindered results achievement. The closures of schools for up to 2 years, limited access to alternative educational offers, continued health risk to SC and partner staff when implementing activities that require community outreach; Limitations for SC staff to conduct physical support or monitoring visits, leading to challenges with provision of in-situ capacity building for partners and proper program follow up.

Despite the Country Offices undertaking adaptation and mitigation program reviews, continuity of education was compromised because most children live in very poor households, especially those in rural areas, without access to radios, computers, mobile phones or internet connections. Therefore, the risk of girls and boys falling behind and dropping out of became a reality. SC rolled out the Back to School campaigns in 2021 aiming to minimize this risk. Working hand-in-hand with national governments and partners was key to support their response to the pandemic.

Increased conflict and war: the war in Ukraine has had significant impacts, increased food insecurity and inflation. The war in Gaza towards the end of 2023, has generated instability in the region and the world. The internal conflicts in Myanmar and more recently in Niger pushing communities into Internal Displacement and forcing the programme to constantly operate under restrictive conditions, adapt and find new ways to implement activities through strong community engagement and stronger partnerships with LCSOs.

Additionally, the MEAL systems and approach adopted in countries like Myanmar and Colombia, contributed to timely project implementation tracking, identification of challenges and efficient adoption of actions for improvement and adaptation. This is however not the case in all countries, and we see this as an internal challenge that will be addressed in the coming years through the implementation of better MEAL systems and the use of technology.

RISKS ANALYSIS ON CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Human rights / Children's rights

The pandemic difficulted reaching children with disabilities as originally planned due to imposed restrictions, inaccessible technology/platforms or increased risk to Covid-19 among some children with disabilities because of underlying disease. The programme did manage to reverse this trend in the

30) https://www.reddbarna.no/content/uploads/2021/01/59-ILET_Impact_Evaluation_Revised_Consilient_2023.pdf

last years of implementation, but it became evident that we need to work beyond the education sector, remove barriers and apply enablers across all thematic areas. There remain too many children with disabilities out-of-school and those that make it to school have less learning outcomes compared to non-disabled children.

During and after the pandemic, countries have experienced increased risk of violence against children, particularly for those who are already at greater risk of violence – including girls and children with disabilities. These situations have impacted the implementation and have even prevented access to certain target areas by the project, like in **Colombia**, where the complex security situation, public order and resurfacing of armed conflict, severely limited access to some of the implementation areas of the programme. Conflict sensitivity, risk assessments and close dialogue and cooperation with the communities and local actors is key to secure safe and continued implementation of programmes in the next period.

Women's rights and gender equality

The Covid-19 pandemic severely impacted the program's reach, especially for girls, increasing gender-based violence, teenage pregnancies, and child marriages due to school closures and poverty. Limited access to health services and unenforced gender laws exacerbated the issue, raising concerns that many girls would get married and may not return to school. In **Malawi** and **Uganda**, these challenges led to significant school dropouts. In **Mozambique**, the project implemented strategies to protect women and girls, including sexual misconduct training, clear reporting guidelines, and transparent recruitment, aiming to mitigate the pandemic's adverse effects on gender equality and education.

Climate change and environment

Natural disasters disrupted programs in most countries. **Malawi**, **Mozambique** and **Guatemala** experienced devastating cyclones/hurricanes/tropical storms; while **Niger** faced a hunger crisis, prompting interventions to prevent school dropouts. In **Somalia**, 158 schools closed due to droughts and floods, exacerbating enrolment declines, especially in rural areas. Programme interventions such as Safe Schools common approach, which includes elements of DRR, risk mapping and response plans, among others, helped communities to mitigate, prepare and respond to extreme climate conditions. The programme will continue working more intensively with climate related intervention in the new phase, and more emphasis and awareness will be developed around the environmental footprint of our own interventions.

Anti-corruption

In 2023 SC is still vulnerable for cybercrime and other types of fraud and embezzlements; however, SC have for a long period addressed these challenges to mitigate the risks as best we can. SC have implemented robust fraud prevention and detection controls, including continuous monitoring, employee training, data analytics, and regular risk assessments. SC is also staying up to date with the latest fraud trends and adjusts our fraud risk management strategies accordingly.

In SCN we continue to receive fraud and corruption incident reports from our fraud unit and established 5 fraud and corruption cases related to NORAD-funded programs in 2023. Total returned funds to NORAD in 2023 was zero.

We did see a small decrease in reported cases to NORAD in 2023 compared to 2022 (5 vs 8), this could be because the project is in its final year, and that the project had become "mature", hence 5th year of monitoring partner implementation should reduce the risk for fraud, and there are also less procurements in the final year of the project.

By the end of 2023, we still have some open fraud cases towards Norad, however, from SCN's side, all cases older than 2023 are considered closed and we will continue to work with our Fraud Unit to close all cases in due time.

In 2023, 1.795 of SC new staff completed mandatory Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Awareness e-learning module and for 2024 we will work with the senior leadership team to ensure that there is an increased focus on boosting training completion rates especially for new employees. We will design and implement a new tracking tool to monitor completion rates on a quarterly basis and prioritise locations where a training is overdue.

SC will also continue to raise awareness with key supporting functions and business partners, highlighting fraud trends and weaknesses to inform business decisions at all levels of the organization.

One concerning event in 2023 for SC as movement, is that we have seen a relatively big increase in cases involving senior staff (Country Office/Partners Senior Management) and that is a key contributing factor to a doubling of triage 1 cases (the most serious cases) in 2023. To respond to this increased risk, there is a recruitment of an Integrity, Ethics & Counter Fraud Director, and SC will design and launch the organisation's first ethics program. This program, complimenting existing Counter Fraud, Safeguarding and Risk Management strategies, will seek to address all behaviours inconsistent with SC values, policies, and procedures. Counter Fraud will review the mechanisms by which staff disclose conflicts of interest and gifts/hospitality and ensure the policy positions on these issues are clear to all staff when they join the organisation.



CANALES DE REPORTE PARA INFORMAR SOBRE SITUACIONES Y SOSPECHAS DE FRAUDE

Correos:

- fraude.colombia@savethechildren.org
- scifraud@savethechildren.org
- cuentanos@savethechildren.org

Teléfonos:

- 3124732655
(Celular del equipo nacional de fraude)
- 018000187669
Línea Telefónica Nacional

Silbato de alarmas:

- SCIwhistleblowing@savethechildren.org
- Www.safecall.co.uk/report
- 018000 944 8040

Escanea / Datix



Fraud and anticorruption communication channels- Colombia.

SCN has recently been certified as plus-partner by Norad. We look forward with considerable interest how this will impact fraud reporting guidelines in the years to come. A simplified and more efficient reporting process is highly welcomed in SC. In 2023 SCN also underwent a thorough control from Norad related to our office in **Uganda** – with no material findings in the final report, thus we hope that this will also serve as positive precedent for a future simplified fraud reporting process.

Cost efficiency-effectiveness

SCN has committed to implementing several initiatives linked to cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness throughout the framework agreement with Norad; this is done in close collaboration with the SC movement. As a complex organization working in challenging contexts, transforming our ways of working has been challenging, but we have made good progress. We have now completed 11 of the original 14 projects aiming for a Highly Efficient Organization.

COMPLETED PRIOR TO 2023:

1. Field Office Connectivity –New hardware installed in 400 field offices, improving connectivity for 12,300 users across 61 countries.
2. Single Treasury Unit (STU) –One treasury management function across members and SCI established, facilitating the movement of money, and improving controls across accounts payable, bank reconciliation and fund transfers.
3. Award Management Change Program (AMCP) – standardized process implemented in all country offices and IP members, reducing duplication of effort and improving the quality and timeliness of donor reports.
4. Effort Reporting & Cost Allocation (ER/CAM) –system rolled out to 17,000 staff to record time-spent, and a single, global allocation methodology implemented for charging shared costs.
5. Strong Country Office Management (SCOM) –Standard operating procedures implemented in country and regional offices to deliver quality, compliant and effective programs,
6. Single Identity –Single username and password software for applications across SCI and members, reducing complexity, enabling remote support, and improving information security.
7. Award Management System Re-platform (AMS RP) –A more stable platform for AMS implemented, improving usability as enabling integration with new systems and functionalities.
8. Accelerating Delivery & Improvement –in 2022, 400 more staff across the Movement were trained in core project and change management practices.
9. Oracle HR –completed deployment to all SCI offices and seven members. We now have 76% of the Movement's workforce on the system, including 100% of SCI staff, facilitating core admin, talent management, recruitment and on-boarding of employees and reducing safeguarding risk.
10. Supply Chain Transformation (SCT) –Transitioned to business as usual (BAU) at end 2021. To date, the Supply Chain Transformation has achieved cumulative financial benefits of \$44,7m by end of 2022. These cost savings are expected to recur year on year. Part of the SCT, is the Fleet Transformation Project, which aims to change the way we finance our fleet of vehicles – moving from donors funding the pur-

chase of a vehicle to be used for one Award, to self-financing the purchase of a pool of vehicles and cost recovering by a leasing charge (the Fleet Service Charge) to donors based on actual use. The final roll-out wave was launched in September 2023, which means we are in-flight in 39 countries (of 40 in scope). 16 countries are applying Fleet Service Charges from 170 vehicles and total cost recovered of \$2.9m.

11. Source to Pay: (Completed in 2023): The Source to Pay system is reducing the time it takes to get supplies to programmes, reducing manual effort for country offices, reducing fraud losses, and improving donor compliance. For example, thanks to the implementation of ProSave, we have:
 - Visibility on 100% of our suppliers, meaning we can improve engagement and analytics.
 - \$655M of spend made visible since implementation, reducing the risk of fraud and disallowances where ProSave is live.
 - 50% reduction in the number of days it takes to raise a purchase request to receive the goods, getting goods to programme quicker.
 - We have a single repository for our purchasing data (a reduction of 198% in the number of data repositories), reducing the audit risk.
 - We have reduced staff time spent producing reports by 99%, meaning more time can be spent on strategic supply chain performance.
12. Project Management Methodology (PMM): (TO BE COMPLETED BY END 2024): will provide us with a consistent project management methodology, process, terminology, and tools for managing programs across the SC movement. The PRIME system, for capturing results, progress, and impact.
 - Through the implementation of PPM PRIME we are moving towards well-designed projects that are delivered on time, on budget and with impact.
 - Country Offices (COs) using PRIME have reported significant improvements in visibility of programme implementation progress, as well as outcomes and their associated activities.
13. Coding (TO BE COMPLETED BY END 2025): 14 offices are now live, and \$195m (14%) of spending in 2024 will be in a new data model integrated across applications. The shared data model:
 - Removes the stress of manually combining data from 3 systems to analyze a country portfolio
 - Allows leaders to identify risks such as lack of diversity of thematic investment
 - Enables analysis on the basis of real data

rather than assumptions, reducing the stress of assumption-based analysis as well as the associated reputational risk

- Clear data mastership and ownership means more consistent data across applications reducing manual rework and audit risk
- Enables better decision-making through improved visibility of cost base

- 14. Agresso Onboarding – (COMPLETION DATE TBC):** This project will streamline the location of financial management systems and data models across parts of the Movement. SCN have completed the Agresso coding model (same for the whole movement), and are live with integrations between Agresso, AMS, PRIME and Oracle HR. This will save a lot of manual work for controllers, award managers and HR going forward.

Safeguarding

Development and trends in Save the Children International

Overall, SC is experiencing a continued increase in the number of safeguarding cases reported. In 2023, reporting increased by 19% to 1090 reported concerns (+ 169 on 2022 results). Key drivers of the increase in reporting levels are unsafe programming concerns, triage level 3 concerns (the least severe cases), and adult safeguarding concerns. The increase is most significant in Latin America and the Caribbean.

This increase in the total amount of cases reported has been constant since the end of the pandemic (2021). Reporting volumes are a good indicator of effective awareness raising, trust in the organisation's reporting and response systems, and accessibility of reporting mechanisms. The increase is understood as a result of strengthening of awareness raising among staff and beneficiaries, and that SC's safeguarding systems are stronger and more mature than in 2019. SC does not expect reporting volumes to go down in the coming years. However, the proportion of early warnings and low-level cases are expected to continue to go up, especially as we activate safeguarding across the organisation.

Safeguarding cases in Save the Children Norway international programming

The table below show all of SCN's safeguarding cases that were reported to our donors in 2020-2023. The table does not include the cases that did not meet the threshold for donor reporting (mostly less severe safer programming concerns). Like SC, SCN sees an increase in the number of cases. This increase is in large part due to the same key drivers as mentioned above. In addition, the clarification on reporting requirements for Norad and NMFA,

concerning corporal punishment cases where the suspect of concern (SoC) is not employed by SC and sexual harassment cases between staff, also contributed to the increase in cases reported to donor between 2021 and 2022. In line with SC, SCN interprets the increase as a positive development, and an outcome of improved awareness raising and a lowering of barriers to reporting in our international programmes.

| Cases reported to all donors | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | Total |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Child Safe-guarding | 17 | 13 | 29 | 40 | 99 |
| Adult Safe-guarding | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Staff Safe-guarding | 1 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 13 |
| Totalt | 18 | 13 | 42 | 46 | 119 |

The table below gives an overview of all cases that SCN has reported to Norad from 2020-2023. In our Norad funded programming we see a positive increase of cases from country offices that have previously not reported or reported very few cases. The increase in cases from Lebanon in 2023 is especially notable. This increase is partly due to increased awareness raising and the implementation of child friendly reporting mechanisms; but it may also be a result of the high staff turn-over with the partners, which requires more regular trainings and partner follow-up.

| Cases Norad funded programmes | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | Total |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Colombia | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Guatemala | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Lebanon | | | 1 | 7 | 8 |
| Malawi | | 1 | 2 | | 3 |
| Myanmar | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Nepal | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 8 |
| Niger | | | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Somalia | 1 | | 5 | | 6 |
| South-Sudan | | 1 | 2 | | 3 |
| Uganda | | 1 | 4 | | 5 |
| Sum | 4 | 4 | 19 | 15 | 42 |

For 2023, the majority of cases reported to Norad have been emotional and physical abuse cases concerning corporal and emotional punishment in SC supported schools and learning centers. Most of the

SoCs in these cases are teachers employed by the partner organisations. In other words, they are not SC employees. We often receive reports through feedback or suggestion boxes in schools or through MEAL consultations.

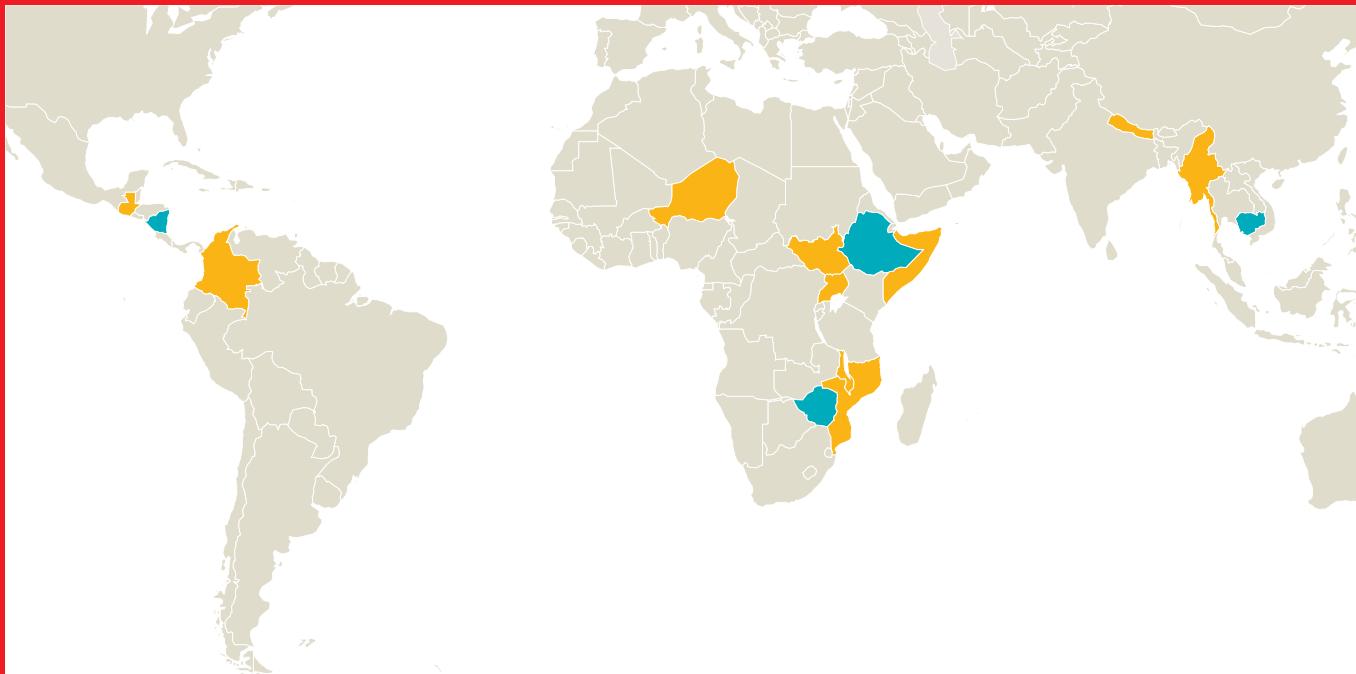
| Child Safeguarding cases by category | Number of cases |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Child labour | 1 |
| Child marriage | 1 |
| Emotional abuse | 6 |
| Physical abuse | 5 |
| Sexual abuse | 1 |
| Total | 14 |



Lessons learned

At the end of the investigation of a safeguarding concern, the country office always notes lessons learned and recommended follow-up actions that should be implemented to mitigate future risk. For corporal punishment cases the lesson learned is too often that teacher was not properly trained in safeguarding and/or not have training in positive disciplining. As a follow up, we are working to better include regular safeguarding and positive discipline training in our programming. SCN is also making sure to bring up safeguarding and discuss implementation and safeguarding systems when visiting a country office. A challenge we often see is that when the SoC is a teacher employed by the government, SC are often not able to investigate nor sanction them, at least not in countries where corporal punishment is not prohibited by law. Through our advocacy work, SC campaigns to end corporal punishment and change legislation where needed.

Another important lesson learned is the importance of awareness raising and child friendly reporting mechanisms. We see this leading to an increase in reporting in several country offices, and especially an increase in the less severe cases. This again enables us to prevent further harm and implement mitigating measures.



The Norad programme is implemented in 12 countries (in yellow) and during this framework period (2019-2023), we have phased-out from 4 countries (in blue).

3. GEOGRAPHICAL PRESENCE

AFRICA

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

In 2023 we saw the first joint member country engagement plan for Uganda (previous years this was Save the Children Norway only). It was interesting to have the call with the Country Office and members from Save the Children Japan, S Korea, Italy, Netherlands, and Denmark together with Norway, and see potential synergies in future planning. During a visit to Malawi in November, we also agreed to do a joint member engagement plan from 2024 with Save the Children Italy and Save the Children UK. During the update call with South Sudan Country Office and members in November, we heard the appreciation that the Norad framework agreement had allowed them to invest further in Child Rights Governance, that Save the Children Sweden had

visited and were leading on a Child Participation training for MEAL staff, that they had now formed the national child parliament and were undergoing ratification, as well as planning to include capacity building (children to have an exchange visit with other members or COs who have active participation) as part of their request for the 2024 joint member engagement plan. During a Country Consultative Group workshop in Somalia in Late 2023, the country office decided with the visiting members, to have all members part of the joint member engagement plan in 2024 (previous years it has been a joint plan for the four Nordic members). In 2024 we will have joint member country engagement plans for South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Malawi and Niger, while the remaining countries continues to have Country Engagement Plans for Save the Children Norway support only.

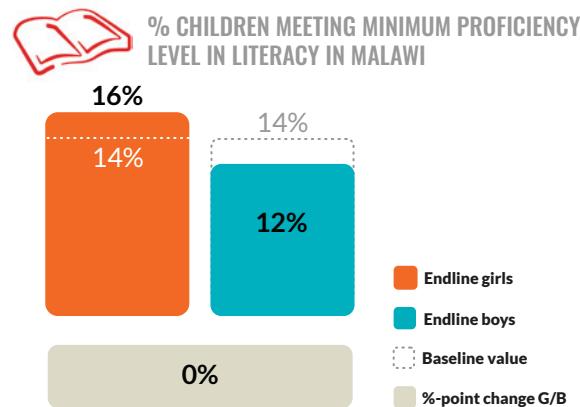
MALAWI



Group of boys in Malawi.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Children with disabilities have shown improvement in both reading and numeracy levels, with a notable increase in the latter. This is likely attributable to the enhanced training of teachers in inclusive pedagogy.



Context update

In 2023, Malawi faced severe climate challenges, including a cholera outbreak and the devastating Cyclone Freddy, leading to loss of life, displacement, and over 700,000 learners affected, including children with disabilities. The cyclone caused widespread damage to homes, crops, and infrastructure, disrupting education and economic activities. Concurrently, the global economic crisis exacerbated the situation, with fertilizer shortages reducing maize production and escalating food insecurity for 4.4 million people. Economic pressures were further intensified by soaring commodity prices, a devalued local currency, and high inflation, culminating in a challenging year for Malawi.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

The education component was rolled out across 266 primary schools in collaboration with local CSOs and government ministries. The program aimed to provide quality, inclusive education in a safe environment, particularly focusing on literacy and numeracy for early-grade children. By the end of the program, 223,563 primary school children were enrolled, recovering from a drop in enrolment during the Covid-19 pandemic. Interventions included dialogue sessions on re-admission policies, safe back-to-school campaigns, and distribution of Covid-19 prevention items. Of these, 15,665 were children with disabilities (8,099 boys and 7,566 girls). The endline results show that the programme-maintained reading proficiency level of grade 4 students at 14% as at baseline, however it declined from the midterm value of 21%. Numeracy proficiency among grade 4 children rose from 9.4% to 52%. It is likely to assume that the reading proficiency gains were hampered by Covid-19, teacher strikes, and natural disasters.

Teacher capacity was enhanced through a new model of continuous professional development, which led to an increase (18% to 37%) in the use of inclusive and child-centered teaching methodologies. The inclusive mentoring approach were accepted by the Ministry of Education and tested models uploaded on the ministry's e-learning site.. Learning camps for children saw an increase in functionality from 73% to 88%, attributed to improved facilitator training and community support. The program also focused on child safety and well-being, training teachers in positive discipline and psychological first aid, and empowering children to participate in creating safer school environments. In response to a rise in child suicide cases, mental health support was bolstered. While there was an increase in children reporting their school as a secure environment, from 36% to 61%, the program did not meet its target for reducing physical punishment by teachers, and issues like bullying and negative disciplinary measures persisted in some schools.

Challenges and deviations: The program faced challenges improving and maintaining learning outcomes largely due to school closures from the Covid-19 pandemic, teacher strikes, and natural disasters. Efforts to mitigate these disruptions included distributing home-based learning kits and launching educational radio programs. However, these measures couldn't fully offset the learning loss, as the foundational education of the affected students was compromised during their early years. Additionally, the impact of home learning was constrained by factors such as parental illiteracy and limited radio access.

Despite efforts on teacher capacity building, the program did not meet its endline target of 65% of teachers using inclusive methodologies. Low scores

registered in creating a conducive learning space, utilizing visual resources, and adapting lessons to individual learner needs. Challenges such as inadequate classrooms, lack of desks, and insufficient teaching materials, exacerbated by the timing of assessments at the start of the academic year, impacted results.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: Endline results highlighted the importance of maintaining learning including alternative learning tools and approaches to sustain children's education outside traditional classrooms when schools are closed or teachers are missing.; integrating support to adult literacy with children's education to improve learning from home; continue support for children with disabilities and improving their learning outcomes and educational participation.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

The EL found that the proportion of girls dropping out of school due to child marriage and teenage pregnancies increased from 13% to 23% at EL. The increase should be seen in relation to the MT results, documenting a high increase in dropouts (18%-points increase from BL to MT in 2021) due to the school closure and social restrictions during Covid-19. When looking at the progress since the MT, the dropouts were reduced by 8%-points till 23% at EL. In comparison, when looking at girls' return rates in Malawi, the picture is more positive. At BL, 26% (131) of girls were returning to school compared to 38% (484) girls at EL, surpassing the EL target (34%).

Programme achievements related to community members attitudes towards child marriage is a bit more mixed. Looking at communities who have taken collective social action against child marriage, there has been a 22%-point increase from 20% at BL. However, when looking at community members' attitudes towards child marriage there has been a regression in the number of community members who view child marriage as an unacceptable practice, from 80% at BL to 77% at EL. This should be seen in relation to the high increase of child marriage and teenage pregnancies that the country experienced during the pandemic and the key drivers of the practices being poverty or lack of economic and social alternatives. Since the start of the pandemic, Malawi has experienced increased poverty and worsening living standards, hitting the vulnerable populations the hardest.³¹

On average, 58% of adolescent girls and boys had a stronger knowledge of ASRHR compared to 38% at BL. In addition, over 10,200 adolescent girls and

boys received SRH outreach services throughout the programme. Collaborations with District Health Offices and community distribution agents were crucial in making SRH services more accessible to adolescents, providing a safe space for them to engage with health workers, creating a safe, non-judgmental environment.

Gender transformative approaches, such as the STAR Circle, were implemented to address discriminatory gender and social norms. These circles engaged community leaders and parents to balance domestic workloads between boys and girls, allowing girls more time for study. The REAL Fathers approach was also instrumental in promoting gender equality and breaking gender stereotypes by encouraging fathers to participate in caregiving, challenging the notion that these responsibilities are exclusively women's roles.

Challenges and deviations: The MTR findings demonstrated a need to strengthen the engagement of men to prevent child marriage. Therefore, post-MTR the REAL Fathers initiative was introduced as a key intervention to change male attitudes by addressing cultural norms and fostering community support.

While there has been an increase in the percentage of girls returning to school after dropping out due to child marriage and/or teenage pregnancies, progress has been slow. Covid-19 led to an increase of child marriage and teenage pregnancies in programme areas eroding earlier progress made. Further, poverty was identified as a major cause for school dropouts, and the program lacked interventions to address household income issues.

Overall, the program has made strides in changing attitudes towards child marriage, increasing access to girls' education and SRH services, and promoting gender equality. However, harmful practices, stigma and misconceptions are still contributing to teenage pregnancies as adolescents seeking health centres to access services are often stigmatized by the communities. Thus, working with community attitudes continue to be important. Moreover, there is still work to be done in ensuring sustainable income for families and addressing the root causes of educational dropouts among girls.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: Gender transformative approaches are essential for addressing the underlying causes of gender inequality, empowering women, and increasing community awareness. Engaging men and boys is critical to combatting teenage pregnancies and child marriages by challenging harmful norms.

31) Unicef Malawi (2024): The cost of Covid-19 on children in Malawi. [https://www.unicef.org/malawi/media/11231/file/Cost_of_COVID19_Study_A4_Web%20\(1\).pdf.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/malawi/media/11231/file/Cost_of_COVID19_Study_A4_Web%20(1).pdf.pdf)

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

The program effectively facilitated the development and submission of **two child-led and one child-informed CSO supplementary reports** to international human/child rights monitoring bodies, resulting in a doubling of child rights recommendations from 52 to 102. Key activities contributing to this result included awareness campaigns, capacity building of CSOs, and child participation in the reporting process, and influencing the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. These recommendations led to government actions such as the allocation of US\$ 110,000 for the National Children's Commission, an increase in funding for the Ministry of Gender to US\$ 48.2 million, and enhanced support for special needs teacher training and secondary school bursaries, reflecting progress despite economic strains from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The program influenced Malawi's government to enhance child participation through the development and launch of the **National Child Participation Guidelines and Strategy**. This has led to the expansion of the Children's Parliament from three districts in 2019 to 20 additional districts by 2023. Additionally, the program has played a role in the **operationalization of the National Children's Commission** as per the Act of Parliament No 12 of 2019. Efforts have also been made to establish a Children's Day in Parliament, with the Social and Community Affairs Committee of Parliament working towards integrating this into the Malawian Constitution and amending parliamentary standing orders. Collaborating with the Malawi Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the program has also contributed to a Legislative Audit report that recommends the explicit criminalization of corporal punishment in various legal acts.

Eight private sector companies in Malawi have been influenced to adopt **Child Rights and Business Principles (CRBP)**, committing to integrate children's rights into their corporate policies, conduct codes, and financial frameworks. Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with five key companies by 2023, including The Electricity Supply Corporation of Malawi (ESCOM), Southern Region Water Board (SRWB), Telecom Networks Malawi (TNM), Sugar Cane Growers Association of Malawi (SUGAM), and RAB Processors.

Challenges and deviations: The submission of Malawi's State Party reports for ACRWC and UNCRC was significantly delayed, impacting the corresponding CSOs and child-led supplementary reports and consequently postponing the review and updated Concluding Observations for UNCRC. The program actively lobbied the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to expedite the submission of State Party reports, which resulted in the ACRWC report being submitted in 2023 and the UNCRC report nearing completion for submission by December

2023. In the interim, the program has relied on previous Concluding Observations from 2016 (UNCRC), 2019 (UPR), and 2021 (ACRWC).

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: In advocating for increased allocation of public resources for children, mere engagement with lawmakers is insufficient. A detailed budget advocacy strategy is crucial in securing increased funds for child-focused initiatives. The next NORAD program will also focus on strategies for enhancing public revenue and advocating for child-friendly tax policies.

Child participation efforts will expand to include Community Children's Parliaments at the local level, enhancing grassroots engagement contributing to a higher-level children's parliament processes.

RISK ANALYSIS

Disability Inclusion: despite significant interventions to ensure children with disability are supported at early years, not many children are identified early enough and supported and participated in decision making process that affecting their lives. The next NORAD Framework will continue to lobby government to utilise the available policies and tools to ensure their participation. **Women and girl's rights:** Efforts to improve gender equality helped the women and girls in the implementing districts to enjoy their rights. However, gender-based violence continue to occur in so many communities. Mobile courts helped to improve access to justice for children especially on child abuse. **Climate and the environment.** Effect of climate was identified as one of the anticipated risks to the programme. During the 5 years, the programme was affected by natural disasters like cyclones and diseases which affected implementation of the programme. Environment and climate change will continue to affect projects and considerations must be made during project design. **Anti-corruption and financial irregularities.** Save the Children Malawi Country Office put in place strategies to curb fraud and corruption among Save the Children staff and partners. However, in the course implementation, the CO terminated contracts with one of the partners due to fraud. The decision forced the program to identify a new partner.

LESSONS LEARNED

The program has provided valuable insights and lessons learned that can inform future programming.

1) The program observed learning outcomes of children with disabilities improved with proper support, driven by continuous teacher mentorship and a professional development program emphasizing inclusive teaching, enhancing teachers' ability to help these students. It is crucial to ensure that such sup-

port is adequately resourced and integrated into the regular training framework for teachers. 2) **Child-friendly mobile courts** have been instrumental in making justice more accessible, especially in rural areas, by overcoming barriers and helping judiciary departments clear case backlogs. These courts are also cost-effective as they eliminate the need for permanent court infrastructure. 3) Supporting the government in policy development must be coupled with help in operationalization, including dissemination and evidence generation, to ensure policies are effectively implemented. Finally, for CSO capacity building, the program recognizes the need for comprehensive Organizational Capacity Assessments and Development plans, with dedicated resources to ensure the sustainability of these organizations.

SUSTAINABILITY

Participation of Stakeholders: Active involvement of children, communities, partners, and government in the interventions has increased ownership and provided opportunities for capacity strengthening, leading to better sustainability prospects.

Learners' Councils: Further programming will continue to assist the government in sustaining learners' councils by supporting routine monitoring of their performance and participation in school management.

The program supported STAR Circle as a transformative approach to gender equality. Incorporating transformative approaches in reducing teenage pregnancies and ending child marriages. We believe this will create a sustainable change by challenging underlying social norms and practices that perpetuate violence against children. In the next NORAD we aim to bolster child protection advocacy by implementing Gender Action Plans within STAR circles, empowering communities to demand services from duty bearers, facilitate school re-admissions, dissolve child marriages, and monitor case management.

MOZAMBIQUE



Reading club in Mozambique.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

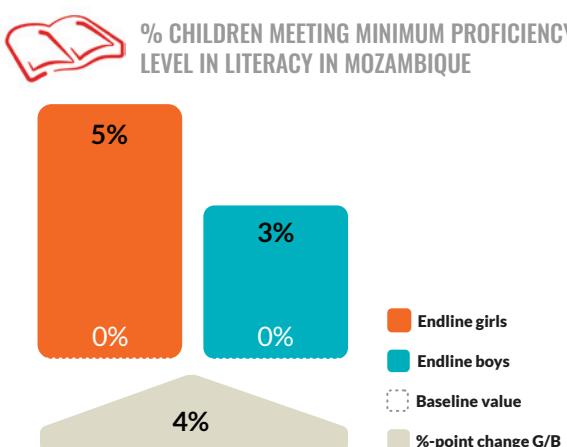
Context update

Between 2019 and 2023, Mozambique faced three significant challenges that greatly affected project implementation. Firstly, military and political conflicts, notably in Cabo Delgado, Niassa, and Nampula provinces, where extremist groups caused over 4,200 casualties and displaced 856,000 individuals, and the closure of 173 schools affecting 97,000 students and 1,774 teachers. Political conflicts, exemplified by RENAMO's (Mozambican National Resistance) armed attacks in Manica and Sofala provinces during 2019-2020, further displaced civilians and required urgent humanitarian aid. Mozambique's electoral processes, alongside post-electoral crises, also impeded project timelines. Secondly, the country faced severe climate-related challenges, being struck by eight cyclones and storms between 2019-2022, causing widespread infrastructure damage, economic disruptions, and adverse effects on education and health systems. Thirdly, the COVID-19 outbreak exacerbated existing educational hurdles with school closures affecting 70% of schools, resulting in learning loss for around 6.5 million students. Despite efforts to provide remote learning, digital access limitations and inadequate teacher preparedness hindered effective education delivery, leaving over half of students disengaged. Initiatives like "Family Based Learning" were introduced to utilize technology and engage children in learning. The Russia-Ukraine conflict caused oil price fluctuations, escalating the cost of goods and services in Mozambique, and worsening economic challenges. The NOK devaluation since April 2022 necessitated prioritization and adjustments in project activities and budgets.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

Overall, the project improved school access and retention. On access, enrolled students increased from 75,881 (G:46%; B: 54%) to 95,788 (G: 48%; B: 52%), an increase of 26.2%. Retention in 115 primary schools went from 90% (G: 89%; B: 90%) to 97% (G/B: 97%) Learning: In literacy, reading fluently increased from 9% to 11% (G:12%; B: 10%) and listening comprehension increased from 9% to 32% (G: 33%; B: 32%). Mastering both, children being literate increased from 0% to 4% (G:5%; B:3%). For numeracy there was a decrease in highest proficiency level from 24% (G:21%; B:26%) to 8% (G:9%; B:7%), however there were also fewer low-performing children in main competencies: 'addition' and 'subtraction' at endline. The increase in literacy by 4% may look low, but it is quite significant given that other available assessments consistently suggest that in Mozambique, less than 10% of children learn basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Project achievements can be attributed to the following: (i) integrated community-based actions to disseminate inclusive and gender sensitive messages on the importance of schooling; (ii) tackling relevant common barriers preventing children accessing education; (iii) addressing teachers' and students' absenteeism; (iv) enhancing training for teachers' and school managers'; (v) establishing literacy-oriented support spaces and groups, including reading camps and fairs, (vi) training itinerant teachers, reading promoters and regular teachers to promote learning of basic skills; (vii) increase capacity of partners, including MoE to provide quality and inclusive education; (viii) and training of school staff and surrounding communities on safe schools' approach, including developing and implementing functional risk-informed school improvement plans to mitigate disasters.



Challenges and deviations: Contextual events demanded prioritization of activities and readjustments of work and budgets, including postponement. Post-MTR, changes were made to enhance outcome delivery. For access and retention, we ensured that community-based platforms worked in an integrated way, not in silos. Organizations working with Children with disabilities were strengthened to empower families with CWDs to prioritize education. On **quality of learning**, changes included aligning Endline targets on children's learning with overall Mozambican educational context; strengthening TPD on use of mother tongue strategies; strengthening teacher's training and supervision; and implementing community-based experiments to curb teachers' absenteeism. On school safety, further reinforced engagement of parents, school boards and school managers to monitor teachers' behaviour, read regulations, disclose the rights and duties of children, use of positive discipline; establishing community and school-based mechanisms to respond to violence in almost all schools; and providing training to 61 CEGRDs (Risk and disaster school management committee).

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: Firstly, to increase access and retention; engage communities; strengthen parents' groups, particularly those living with CWDs; strengthen school leadership; and address students' absenteeism. Second, set learning targets that are in line with learning context of Mozambique and address teacher's absenteeism, motivation, and professional and pedagogical competence. Third, ensuring school safety by engaging surrounding communities is key for expanding and maintaining the quality of school infrastructures. Finally, carefully plan assessments targeting children to ensure they are not physically and psychologically tiring and impact negatively their performance.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

Firstly, the programme successfully influenced the approval of both the Preventing and Combating Premature Unions Law, and the reviewed Family Law, removing an article authorizing child marriage with parental consent, and approving a penal code strengthening accountability of perpetrators of violence against children. Secondly, at EL 91% of community members (F:90%; M: 92%) believed that child marriage is an unacceptable practice (an increase of 20%-points), and 51% of communities took some action against it. School dropouts due to child marriage and teenage pregnancies were reduced by 7%-points to 5% at EL. Adolescents' knowledge of ASRHR increased with 16% points (F: 12%p; M: 19%p) at EL. This contributed to ensuring access to ASRH services and information for over 25,600 adolescents. Multisectoral technical capacity

on child protection at government level and close coordination with community-based structures in case management was significantly strengthened, contributing to reducing physical punishment of children by teachers by 33%- points (G: 39%p; B: 26%p) at EL and 15%-points (G: 12%p; B: 20%p) by parents and caregivers. 597 children (G: 55%; B: 45%) were supported with case management, psychosocial support, reintegration package with economic empowerment initiatives and education. 60% of the 115 CBCPM were revitalized and supported with capacity building. Through the pilot phase of the community-led child protection approach, 15 community facilitators were trained, 449 adults (F: 209; M: 68) and 240 children (G/B: 50% CwD: 12) were engaged in discussions and defining actions for child protection.

Challenges and deviations: Although progress has been noted, the programme still registered child marriage cases and other CP concerns due to negative practices driven by economic hardship. The weakness of the justice system to implement the law and ensure the perpetrators are held to account contributed to a lack of trust in communities, leading to underreporting. The lack of resources, safe reporting mechanisms and response services placed children at risk. Therefore, in 2022, the programme increased interventions to strengthen the accountability mechanisms and investments in access to justice for children.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: Firstly, to address child marriage a holistic approach should be applied, this will significantly promote more sustainable results in girls reintegration and retention in schools; the capacity of school managers and focal points on gender equity and sensitivity should be strengthened and ensure coordination with community structures; Second, the law is not enough to prevent child marriage, more investments are needed in social and behavioral change interventions to address root causes of the practice; Thirdly, it is important to ensure the involvement of parents/caregivers in all preventive and reintegration process of survivors of violence as well as assess protective/risk factors influencing child wellbeing.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

The project has strengthened strategic partnership on Child Rights Advocacy through the 3R Platform and PLASCOC. The 3R Platform was established in 2020 and has been developing a joint CR advocacy at national and provincial levels. PLASCOC is a Manica-based Provincial CSO Platform, which led the implementation of CCSA, public budget advocacy and Chimoio level child participation interventions. The Child Annual Report and Booklet of Children's Dreams is a child-led reporting process which started in 2020 coordinated by the 3R Platform with

child-to-child interaction in all provinces of Mozambique. This report and booklet contain the views of children about their rights and their ideas on what is required and how to enjoy them. The Accountability to Children Initiative is a child-led process, designed and introduced by SCI to the 3R Platform. After testing the initiative, the Child Parliament started to implement the approach, first in Maputo, then it was extended to 5 other provinces (Inhambane, Manica, Nampula and Cabo Delgado). What makes the implementation of this initiative unique is that both primary duty-bearers and secondary duty-bearers including CSOs, and UN agencies were invited to come forward to account to children.

Challenges and deviations: Most significant challenges, changes and deviations covering the whole programme period: As mentioned previously, Covid-19 affected CRG as most of the child participation interventions and advocacy required face-to-face interactions and events. One of the outcomes in CRG was the adoption of the child participation strategy/policy by the government of Mozambique (MGCAS). The achievement of this outcome required peer learning interactions between the MGCAS and Uganda, with plans for MGCAS to visit Uganda and learn how its government adopted its child participation strategy. Owing to Covid-19 the trip was canceled, as MGCAS prioritized other emerging demands.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: One of the key lessons learned is that children are the main actors of child rights advocacy. Children were targeted as recipients of support to enhance their participation in various activities. They proved to be capable of being the key players at the forefront of advocating for their own rights. The lesson learned is that children, if supported to engage and participate meaningfully, have the capacity to be the main advocates of their own rights. This was done through the development of child-led supplementary reports as well as in CCSA processes including the accountability to children initiative. In addition, establishing strategic partnership with CR CSOs at all levels, is determinant for the successful and solid CR advocacy. SCI relied on these strategic partners, invested in improving and building their capacity, as well as allowing the involved partners to play the main and front role.

RISK ANALYSIS

Most predicted risks materialized during implementation, yet their impact was low, and planned remedies sufficed to prevent major disruptions. Climate-related shocks, including cyclones, posed the initial risk, exemplified by Cyclone Idai in March 2019, which affected Manica province. Program activities were replanned, prioritizing essential tasks

to accommodate staff involvement in humanitarian response efforts. Increased dissatisfaction among medical and teaching professionals arose from unmet expectations related to new salary scales. Medical staff strikes in December 2022 and July–August 2023, disrupted nationwide medical services. Teachers also expressed dissatisfaction, leading to protests and silent manifestations across public sectors. Although returning to work, service quality remained subpar, with ongoing silent strikes. The Russia-Ukraine conflict elevated goods and services prices in Mozambique due to oil price fluctuations, worsening living conditions. NOK devaluation since April 2022 prompted activity prioritization and budget adjustments. Additionally, political climate constraints limited civil society's role, with ongoing discussions regarding a new law governing civil society activities, jeopardizing advocacy efforts. Despite ongoing discussions, the new law governing NGO operations remains unresolved, posing a continued high-risk probability. The risk analysis remains consistent, indicating potential obstacles to civil society's advocacy work due to legislative uncertainties.

LESSONS LEARNED

One of the key learnings on this program is that partnerships engagement is key. Partners have been actively involved at every stage, starting from the design phase. The three primary partners—Jossoal, GCR, and Bvute Re Rufaro—participated in a three-day SCI workshop for proposal design in Maputo. Additionally, SCI held two one-day sessions with strategic CSO partners (MEPT, ROSC, Rede da Criança, Child Helpline, Rede CAME, and FAMOD). During these sessions, key advocacy issues were discussed, along with the partners' needs for better advocacy. As the project progressed, SCI engaged with other entities, including PLASOC in Manica, the 3R platform, and the CECPA coalition to end early marriage. This collaborative approach allowed for effective advocacy and impactful actions, leveraging the expertise and relationships of each partner. Overall, engaging partners at all program stages enhanced SCI's impact on child rights at both the ground level and the national level. For example, working with partners such as ROSC and the 3R platform, SCI linked its program to the Budget Monitoring Forum (FMO). This engagement allowed for advocacy on national budget allocation to address child needs. The involvement of government partners throughout the project life cycle ensured program acceptance and facilitated joint planning and monitoring. Collaboration with the government increased visibility for SCI and CSO partners work, enabling advocacy for necessary changes. The involvement of the MINEDH in the whole project life cycle, with special attention to related central divisions such as the National Directorate for Primary Education (DNEP) and the National Directorate for

Teacher's Training (DNFP) and middle directorates such as the National Directorate for Quality and Cross-Cutting Issues, guarantees the visibility of the project at national level and dissemination into other geographical areas. At community level, viewing communities and children as active partners within the intervention fosters commitment and ownership of the program. Their engagement in program activities highlights the importance of community involvement for positive changes in children's lives. Enhancing the capacity of CPCCs enables them to spread awareness about attending school, report rights violations, and take leadership roles in risk mitigation.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project increased access and retention of children in schools through establishing/strengthening community-based settings and undertaking sensitization on the importance of schools. The project addressed economic and socio-cultural common barriers that hinder children's access to education. The community-based platforms and actions are well placed to continue to be functional after the end of the project, even though Save the Children is phasing out the Norad program from Manica province. Our partners in Manica stated in November that they will continue and that through capacity building over years, they now have the guidelines, policies and structures that make them access direct funding. The project has succeeded: (i) in making schools meet emotional and psychological protection standards, as per the Manual of Quality Standards and Indicators; (ii) in reducing cases of physical punishment by teachers and parents; (iii) in training schools and surrounding communities on safe schools' approach and on developing school improvement plans to mitigate disasters; (iv) in making schools meet school infrastructure standards as per District Monitoring Manual and ensure community contribution to school safety. While the project has made some progress in enhancing children's literacy and numeracy skills, it has identified challenges primarily related to oral and written fluency in Portuguese rather than comprehension. Additionally, it has pinpointed teacher absenteeism, competence, and motivation as pivotal factors influencing student learning outcomes. Consequently, the project has implemented sustainable interventions to address these issues which are being advocated for acceptance by educational authorities. Capacity building for implementing partners has been tailored based on SCI assessments. Strategic partners have collaborated with SCI to identify common advocacy issues and pinpoint capacity strengthening requirements that makes them more effective. CSO partners have incorporated approaches learned from SCI into their programming, ensuring continuity and scalability of actions. Improved visibility and capacity among part-

ners such as JOSSOAL and PLASOC have facilitated continued advocacy and project implementation, both locally and nationally. Government adoption of SCI approaches and close collaboration have further enhanced project outcomes, with joint field visits facilitating mutual learning and alignment with government plans and guidelines.

NIGER



A group of children playing hopscotch in Niger.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

In 2023, Niger faced significant political upheaval and environmental challenges. The coup d'état on July 26, 2023, led to heightened political instability, triggering sanctions from ECOWAS, suspension of ODA funding from Western countries and the African Development Bank, potentially jeopardizing millions of inhabitants' access to essential social services. In particular, the situation challenges the realisation of children's rights, including the right to education, exacerbated by a reduction in civic space and advocacy opportunities. Natural disasters and conflicts led to severe food insecurity affecting 4.6 million Nigeriens, 55% of whom are children and adolescents. Heavy floods during the rainy season have displaced thousands of households and damaged educational infrastructure.

In Zinder, 2023 has seen a cautious calm in terms of security, but the region grapples with the repercussions of illicit trafficking and fuel smuggling, as it serves as a route for migration towards the Maghreb and Europe. Notably, children moving through and from the department of Kantché, a focus area for the NORAD program, are at high risk of economic exploitation.

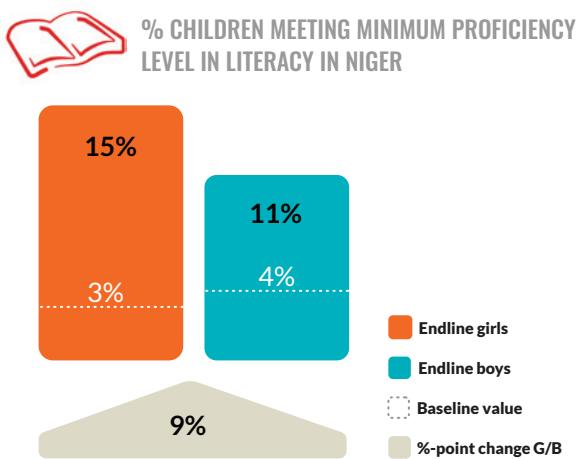
Diffa's context in 2023 has been shaped by persistent insecurity due to attempted incursions by non-state armed groups. This insecurity is manifested in threats, kidnappings for ransom, targeted assassina-

tions, and recruitment of children, leading to population movements towards larger centres. Additionally, poor rainfall in Diffa has led to a precarious food security situation with rising cereal prices.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

Despite challenges in the zones of intervention, the project contributed to improving access to quality basic education in Niger for a total of 53,406 children (26,730 girls). Enrolment in the 82 targeted schools improved steadily from 2019 to 2023, with an overall increase of 16 % (G: 18%; B: 14%) with more girls enrolled (17,066) than boys (16,540) in 2023. Factors that contributed to the improving trends are the Back-to-School campaigns organized before the start of each school year, pre-registration activities in favour of girls' schooling, and advocacy activities carried out with the support of the Regional Directorates of Education (DREN) and the partners ASO-EPT and the Nigerien Federation of People with Disabilities (FNPH). In addition, accelerated learning classes facilitated by the partner Fassali allowed the reintegration into formal school of 1,171 children (657 girls). The programme has also enabled a significant increase in the enrolment of children with disabilities: from 332 children (148 girls) enrolled in 2019 to 760 children (346 girls) at present.



Learning outcomes for children in reading proficiency substantially increased. From a baseline of 3%, the endline figures for grade 3 students' proficiency climbed to 13%. Girls (+12%-points) showed a higher increase than boys (+7%-points), while at regional level the highest improvement is observed in Diffa (+13%-points). This significant progress is the result of the interventions targeting teachers' competencies, children's safety and wellbeing at school, and the improvement of the learning envi-

ronment through the mobilization of school governance structures. Community mobilization and literacy activities, achieved with the support of partner organizations ASO-EPT, Mungane and ONEE Katoutou, was a decisive factor for the improvements observed. The fact that the majority of grade 3 children still do not meet the required proficiency level is linked to challenges related to the language of instruction (French instead of national languages) and lack of manuals and appropriate school infrastructure.

The programme also contributed to increasing children's wellbeing and safety at school. On a wellbeing index from 0 to 10, children showed an increase of 0.7 index points from baseline (7.6) to endline (8.3). Girls' wellbeing score at endline (8.4) is higher than for boys (8.1). The programme's significant achievements in reducing physical punishment by teachers are an important factor in the progress observed. Teacher training in positive discipline and the ratification of codes of conduct in all targeted schools resulted in the drop of children who have been physically punished by a teacher in the last 12 months from 64% at baseline to 30% at endline. Boys (32%) are more exposed than girls (28%), but the gap has narrowed from 8% at baseline to 4% at endline. In addition, all 82 schools employ a protection referral system, which also contributed to increasing children's sense of safety and wellbeing. The referral systems have been set up and publicised through cooperation with the village protection committees that have been established and dynamized with the support of the partner Aicave. This school-based referral system has strengthened the link with appropriate care at community level, resulting in the referral of 193 children (104 girls) from 2019 to 2023.

To provide teachers with inclusive, gender-sensitive and child-centred pedagogical tools and methodologies, SC implemented the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) approach in cooperation with the DREN of Zinder and Diffa. Out of 570 teachers enrolled (449 women) since 2019, 537 teachers (442 women) completed at least 4 out of 6 cycles of training. As result, teachers rate themselves as having mastery (a "Proficient" or "Advanced" proficiency level) in 83% of the competency assessments, compared to 16% at baseline.

The strengthening of participatory school management and community engagement was pursued through the "Improving Learning Environments Together" (ILET) approach, which is centred on the participatory development, implementation, and evaluation of School Improvement Plans (SIPs). Two data-collection rounds were conducted in the supported schools, showing that 59% of the schools (36 schools out of 61 sampled) have achieved the expected threshold for the improvement of the school environment. Across all schools, there is an increase in the ILET score from 64% before intervention to

69% after implementation, mostly registered in the dimensions of a) teaching and learning and b) parent and community involvement. It is challenging to reach satisfactory standards for the quality learning environment in the context of Niger, because many schools do not meet the necessary criteria (classrooms under straw huts, students sitting on the ground, unfenced schools) for improved environment.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

The programme has achieved some progress in combating child marriage and improving knowledge of sexual and reproductive health among adolescents. Regarding attitudes towards child marriage, awareness campaigns led by SC in collaboration with local CSOs, traditional leaders and the local authorities have led to a positive shift in perceptions. Endline results show a slight regression in the acceptance of child marriage, with a decrease of 7%-points, 2 %-points among women and 11 %-points among men from the baseline. These results are the fruit of concerted efforts, including training workshops and awareness caravans. The involvement of local protection committees, religious leaders and groups of girl leaders has contributed to an improvement in reporting and detection. Addressing child marriage as a health issue rather than a right or protection issue in communities has reduced sensitivity to the subject and improved acceptance. Despite all the efforts, child marriage is still a problem particularly amongst radical religious leaders and marginalized groups. Faced with livelihood difficulties, many vulnerable families opt for emigration in search of a better life and prefer to give young girls in marriage to ease the family burden and protect the girls from the risks related to migrating.

In terms of knowledge about sexual and reproductive health among adolescents, the program has made notable progress. Among the adolescents surveyed, the understanding of the risks and prevention of HIV/AIDS increased by 5 %-points at the endline, while the knowledge of family planning methods increased by 9 %-points (+13%p among girls) and the understanding of risks related to early marriage and pregnancies increased by 15 %-points. This improvement is attributed to the identification and training of mentors who have guided adolescents in the communities, in secondary schools and in vocational training centres.

Regarding the management of protection cases, the programme achieved important results in strengthening the protection systems at regional and national level. Following the Quality Assessment Framework (QAF) evaluation performed in 2022 with the support of SC, all protection actors have harmonized and improved tools, forms, feedback mechanisms and consultation frameworks, have created a forum for stakeholder consultation and evaluation of child protection case management activities,

and the CPIMS+ platform has been rolled out across NGO and state services. SC has directly assisted 164 cases since 2022.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

The implementation of the Child Rights Governance activities in Niger has been challenged by staff turnover, a lack of capacity in the country office, and the upheavals caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the coup d'état. Spending was low, and many outputs have not been delivered as originally planned. Adapting to urgent needs, SC has rerouted some of the allocated funds to other programmatic areas and advocacy opportunities, mainly to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, since the end of 2022, SC and partners have achieved significant progress in building children's active participation in decision-making processes and in holding the government to account on delivering their commitments to children.

Through this programme, we have supported both the State and the civil society, including children, to submit child rights reports to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), providing technical and financial support for validation workshops and participating as an observer in the civil society drafting committee. The evaluation of children's perceptions of the quality of their participation in the reporting process showed that 86% of the children appreciated the methodology and tools used, demonstrating a successful consideration of their views and priorities.

SC and partners delivered a Child-Centred Social Accountability pilot in 8 communities. These pilots made it possible to build the capacities of the authorities, communities, and children on children's participation in decision-making, to initiate dialogue between the stakeholders and to develop action plans. While the aim of the pilots was merely to explore the utility of the approach in the Nigerien context, some of the results are already impressive, such as in Takara where the inspectorate added a teacher to the school, in Agangaraou where the town council and the community set up a communal school canteen, and in Doungou, where the town council repaired the roofs of the classrooms.

RISK ANALYSIS

The military coup of 26 July 2023 impacted SC's ability to operate, especially at institutional level. SC halted direct transfer of funding to governmental partners, though cooperation and coordination with the regional directorates of education and child protection continued. The ECOWAS sanctions and shrinking civic space place Niger in a period of transition and uncertainty that could weaken state institutions and exacerbate violations of children's rights. Other external risks related to food insecurity, climate shocks such as cyclical droughts and floods

and the conflict in the Lake Chad basin affecting the region of Diffa. The latter, despite the relative calm experienced in 2022 and 2023, has posed operational constraints in Diffa by limiting the mobility of the team and key community stakeholders, and high costs for security measures. Heavy floods have occurred each year during the rainy season in both targeted regions, posing the necessity of rehabilitating damaged classrooms, furniture and latrines, as well of replacing damaged educational materials. Increasing food insecurity crisis necessitate school feeding interventions, but current resources only allow insufficient initiatives.

Covid-19 did not impose a heavy toll on Niger. Schools were closed for 2 months only (May-June 2020), and the loss of schooling time was partially recovered during summer 2020. The pandemic, however, affected programme implementation by imposing high costs related to sanitation and barrier measures to allow the reopening of schools and activities.

In terms of internal risks, high staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting qualified staff in Niger, especially in child protection, CRG and MEAL, is a major threat to the programme. Investments in staffing have been made in 2022 and the teams were considerably reinforced, but the delays in the implementation and the dysfunctions have been significant.

LESSONS LEARNED

SC and partners have achieved notable improvements in terms of teacher competencies, learning environments, community engagement, and children's well-being. However, we see the need for deeper engagement with the communities and municipalities to ensure the sustainability of these achievements. Moreover, the fact that more than 40% of children in Niger are out of formal schools calls for an expansion of the programme's scope to include non-formal education avenues, such as Koranic schools.

Child protection initiatives initially faced challenges due to a lack of integrated response activities for girls affected by child marriage and SGBV. This was rectified by incorporating case management activities and bolstering formal protection systems. Moving forward, these interventions should be expanded. Additionally, the transition from primary to secondary education is a juncture where many girls drop out of schools. Addressing this gap could significantly reduce the risk of child marriage and support the continuation of girls' education.

Though this programme, SC has learned the importance of creating and strengthening collaborative frameworks among CSOs. To achieve significant results and durable change on child rights, we will strengthen further our collaboration with national organizations, coalitions and other INGOs, as well as improving networking between child-led coalitions

and children's community structures. The establishment of a unifying Consultation Framework for CSOs in Niger facilitated greater visibility of each partner's actions, enhanced experience sharing, and led to more child-centred advocacy actions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability has been a focus in strategic planning, informed by lessons learned throughout programme implementation. The longevity of the programme's impacts rests on the transition towards community ownership and integration of programme initiatives into local governance structures. This involves strengthening local school governance structures and child protection networks, ensuring they are equipped to continue the programme's activities beyond its formal conclusion. Engagement with government stakeholders is crucial to maintain the momentum achieved in enhancing access to quality education and child protection services. However, engagement at high level is sensitive following the military coup.

The programme has worked towards establishing robust mechanisms for child participation and advocacy, ensuring that children's voices continue to be heard in decision-making processes that affect their lives. The strengthening of civil society's capacity to monitor and advocate for child rights is another cornerstone for sustainability, ensuring that gains in child protection and participation are not only preserved but also built upon. Sustainability of the programme is being actively pursued through community empowerment, strategic partnerships with government bodies and local and national actors, and the fortification of civil society's role in child rights advocacy. These efforts are designed to ensure that the positive changes initiated by the programme will endure and continue to evolve, even after the programme's direct involvement ends. The programme's next phase will continue to increase local partner's agency and leadership, ultimately increasing local ownership of the programme and sustainability, and will focus on a phased exit from currently supported schools and communities, emphasizing the importance of a well-defined exit strategy and phase-out criteria.

SOMALIA



Children at school/learning space in Somalia.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

Somalia is currently going through a complex and long humanitarian crisis which has been exacerbated by the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as by severe drought and flooding incidents.³² In 2023, increased fighting led to hundreds of civilian casualties and the displacement of nearly 650,000 people. One of the major conflicts occurred in the contested town of Las Anod between Somaliland security forces and armed groups, causing civilian deaths, and forcing over 154,000 people to flee internally and to Ethiopia. The armed group Al-Shabab also conducted targeted attacks, resulting in the loss of many civilian lives. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud launched offensives against Al-Shabab, leading to further civilian displacement. The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) began withdrawing forces, and the Somali government requested a delay in the withdrawal of additional troops. In Puntland, the transition from a clan-based electoral system to a one-person-one-vote model resulted in political challenges and intermittent violence. Consequently, program implementation in the region were disrupted. However, the re-election of the previous president brought back stability to the region and restored normalcy.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

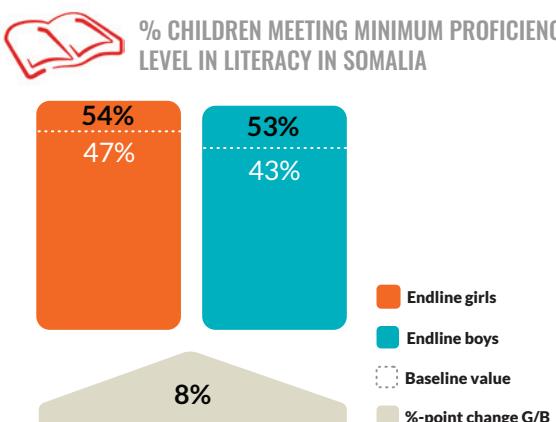
Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

Through a combination of effective strategies, the education component highlights several key achievements throughout the programme period. Enroll-

32) <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/somalia>

ment in target schools increased by 34.2% from baseline to endline with a total of 21,266 students enrolled of which 10,434 being girls. This represents 99% of the target enrollment. The programme also made a significant contribution in **promoting inclusive education**, as evidenced by the 298.4% rise in the **enrolment of children with disabilities**, from a baseline of 289 to an endline of 1008.

Retention rates shows similar improvement, with the rate reaching 88% by grade 5 in the supported schools, indicating that the initiatives to keep children in school were effective. Both girls and boys exhibited nearly equal retention rates, at 87% and 88% respectively. In terms of teaching quality, there was a marked improvement in teaching practices, which included the adoption of child-centred approaches, enhanced lesson planning, and effective classroom management. The proportion of teachers demonstrating these improved professional practices jumped from 29% at the baseline to 70% at the endline. This improvement led to better learning outcomes, with students' **literacy skills** rising from 45% at BL to 53% at the EL.



Challenges and deviations: The educational landscape faced challenges from both natural and man-made disasters. Recurring droughts, floods, the Covid-19 pandemic, and clan conflicts led to migration and increased absenteeism among children, disrupting the continuity of education. Furthermore, financial limitations of the Ministry of Education were highlighted as a significant barrier to providing adequate teacher compensation.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: There was a clear indication of a gender imbalance in the teaching workforce, with a majority of observed teachers being male. This underscored a significant shortage of qualified female teachers in Somali schools, pointing to the need for targeted initiatives to recruit and retain more female educators. Such initiatives are essential to ensure that girls have

role models within education and to promote gender equality in the teaching profession.

The EL showed a marked improvement in teaching practices across the supported schools. Teachers demonstrated enhanced professional practices, which led to better learning outcomes for students, particularly in literacy. This improvement is a testament to the effectiveness of the teacher training and support components of the program, including enhanced use of Education Technology.

The enrolment of children with disabilities increased substantially, reflecting successful strides towards inclusive education. This increase suggests that the program's efforts to accommodate and support children with disabilities are having a positive impact.

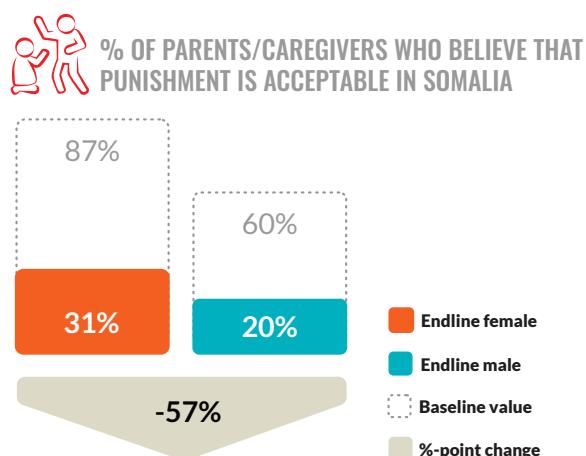
The capacity enhancement of local partners and the success in advocacy efforts, including the preparation and submission of reports to international bodies, demonstrated progress in the implementation of children's rights. These efforts show the importance of continued advocacy and capacity building to sustain and advance children's rights initiatives.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

Overall, the End-Line finds a positive change in parents' attitudes towards positive parenting methods, with a significant decrease in the use of punishment as a disciplinary method. The percentage of parents who believe that punishment is acceptable dropped from 86% at the BL to 29% at the EL. There is also a decline in the occurrence of physical and humiliating punishment experienced by children from their caregivers which decreased from 97% at the BL to 59% at the EL. The EL also revealed significant progress in the number of functional community-based child protection mechanisms which increased from 46% at the BL to 98% at the EL. As result, the percentage of CP cases responded to by child protection mechanisms increased from 29% at BL to 89% at EL with 838 cases (G: 440; B: 398) including 99 cases regarding children with disabilities (G56; B: 43) being reported by the partners through Child Welfare Committees and social workers/caseworkers over the implementation period. This indicates a substantial enhancement in the effectiveness and efficiency of child protection mechanisms in responding to reported cases.

Challenges and deviations: The occurrence of natural disasters such as recurring droughts, floods, and the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as man-made disasters like clan conflicts contributed to exacerbate child protection and GBV risks. In addition, deeply rooted cultural practices which impede the development and empowerment of girls in the community are still very prevalent. The persistence of cultural beliefs and the practice of harmful traditions such

as child marriage and female genital mutilation have demanded additional measures and efforts and resources to strengthen interventions that address GBV concerns. Engaging and empowering community and religious leaders as change agents and advocates for the rights of girls and women, has been instrumental in reducing stigma, discrimination, and marginalization. These leaders play a crucial role in shaping attitudes and behaviours within families and communities, as well as influencing policies and programs affecting girls and women. This approach helps create a culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, while preventing and addressing violence, abuse, and exploitation against girls and women.



Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: There was a positive shift in parents' and caregivers' attitudes, with a significant decrease in the acceptance and use of physical and humiliating punishment. The activation and effectiveness of community-based child protection mechanisms also improved, leading to a higher rate of child protection cases responded to. This progress indicates a growing awareness and rejection of harmful disciplinary practices. The EL also revealed different perceptions of positive parenting between genders. A higher percentage of male respondents (80%) found physical or humiliating punishment unacceptable compared to female respondents (20%). This disparity may reflect the added pressures on women, who are often primary caregivers, and highlights the need for support systems that address the challenges faced by female caregivers.

The programme employed a method of selecting champions from each of the Parenting without Violence cohorts. These champions were engaged in mobilizing other community members and encouraging their participation, by sharing their own experiences to inspire new members. However, in the new phase, the program will adopt a more systematic approach to engage champions. This approach

involves educating other peers by linking them to community-based structures, existing VSLA groups, and when feasible, local authorities. This strategy aims to sustain the efforts of raising awareness and sharing knowledge on positive parenting even after the program has phased out.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

Following a series of capacity-building initiatives, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) met 81% of their organisational capacity milestones and delivered important initiatives for child rights. Notably, through support from SC Somalia and with consultation of children, CSOs developed and submitted supplementary reports to the international human rights instruments (The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2019 and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) in 2020). In addition, SCI has supported Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to develop supplementary reports to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Increased Child Participation: Children were actively involved in advocacy efforts, with their participation in forums and decision-making processes being a priority. Notably, children from the program supported schools participated virtually in the CRC 86th pre-session in Geneva, contributing their perspectives on child rights issues in Somalia. The program also established Child Rights Committees (CRCs) in all 47 supported schools, providing a structured environment for promoting child rights and facilitating children's active involvement in their communities.

The program has contributed to advocacy for policy and legislative advancements. The Somali government has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and are working towards ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). These legal frameworks are crucial for the protection and promotion of children's rights. The program also supported the review and enhancement of a National Disability Bill submitted for Parliament approval, and the development of a National Plan of Action for Children 2024/2027, approved in 2023.

Challenges and deviations: Continuous political instability due to the political and complex humanitarian crises in Somalia (Drought, Covid-19, food insecurities and conflicts), delayed the approval process of African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) and as well the implementation of UNCRC and CRPD.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: Children's participation in preparing and sharing the Somalia CRC supplementary report, provided an opportunity for the children to express

their views, experiences and perspectives on issues related to their rights and well-being.

RISK ANALYSIS

The economic downturn triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic extended its impact to the broader objectives of the project, notably influencing the Ministry of Education's (MoE) financial capacity to assume responsibility for teacher incentives. An established strategy and agreement initially envisioned a gradual transition for the MoE to fully fund teacher incentives, integral to the program's sustainability and exit plan. However, due to the pandemic's financial strain, the project had to adapt, continuing to provide teachers with a 70% incentive rate until the program's conclusion. This measure aimed to support teachers in meeting their familial responsibilities and sustaining their dedication to their teaching roles.

The severe drought during the program period prompted widespread displacement and the early shutdown of nine rural schools in the Galgadud region, adversely affecting student attendance and literacy rates. To combat the drought's effects, the program implemented water tracking in the most affected areas. Additionally, Save the Children International integrated other support projects in these communities to aid children and their families.

Additionally, the program faced a variety of risks throughout its implementation that had a direct or indirect impact on its operations. These included **climate-related changes, political instability, inter-clan conflicts, and general insecurity**. For example, intense rainfall led to flash flooding, which inflicted damage on classroom structures and school perimeters at program-supported institutions in Gardo and Beledweyne. In response, the program worked jointly with the Ministries of Education to rebuild and repair the compromised educational facilities.

LEASSONS LEARNED

The program has provided valuable insights and lessons learned that can inform future programming. 1) the implementation of the Enabling Teachers' Common Approach, has proven effective in enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills and improving learning outcomes. Scaling up this approach should be prioritized. 2) the integration of education, child protection, and child rights governance has contributed to creating inclusive and safe learning environments, ensuring that children receive comprehensive support. 3) Girls are more likely to drop out of school as they get older. Therefore, implementing initiatives such as Enhancing Girls Friendly Spaces (GFS) in more schools can help support girls and encourage their continued education. Also, Need-based scholarships have proven effective in improving children's

enrolment and ensuring the continuity of their education. 4) Strengthening the capacity of Child Rights Clubs (CRCs) and Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) has enabled the programme to extend its interventions and reach children with disabilities, ensuring their inclusion in education. Lately, Community Education Committees (CECs) have played a significant role in project implementation and the functioning of schools voluntarily.; Capacity building of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and CRCs has been instrumental in advocating for children's rights and supporting their well-being.

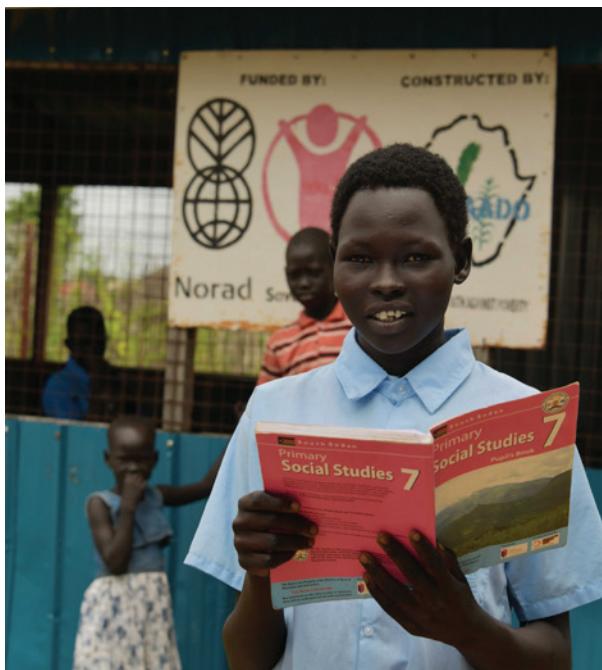
SUSTAINABILITY

The program established Community Education Committees (CECs), Child Welfare Committees (CWCs), and Child Rights Clubs (CRCs) in schools, which are pivotal in management and advocacy efforts. These structures are designed to continue post-program. Leap learning labs with tablets have been successfully maintained in some schools for seven years, demonstrating durability and effective use of resources. Schools have been empowered to manage funds through grants provided via CECs, with some communities even starting savings schemes to support ongoing school needs.

Partners are well-equipped to continue community and school support, especially in case management, in collaboration with CWCs. Schools maintain direct lines to Ministries of Education (MoEs) for continued assistance and networking with other support entities.

The next Norad program (2024-2028) will keep supporting 21 schools to preserve the program's gains, focusing on ownership, capacity building, and partnerships with MoEs and other entities, ensuring the program's impacts are sustained before expanding to new schools in subsequent agreements.

SOUTH SUDAN



Girl returns to school after child marriage in South Sudan.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

The influx of returnees and refugees from the neighbouring Sudan is impacting heavily the already scarce resources. 442210 people crossed the border since the start of the conflict in Sudan in mid-April, until December 2023. Internally in South Sudan, the White Army (youth from Lou Nuer) in Jonglei State marched to the Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA) in January 2023 for a revenge attack and clashed with youths from GPAA. Dozens were killed or wounded and hundreds of children and women were abducted. The Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, Save the Children and other child-focused organizations actively engaged with youth leaders and state authorities resulting in the recovery and reunification of over one hundred abducted children and women. Consequently, programme implementation was temporarily disrupted in Baidit and Jalle where people were relocated to areas close to Bor Town.

Rainy season started later than usual in 2023 (April-May), and most of farming activities didn't start until late June when the first irregular rains commenced. The earlier planted crops withered due to excessive heat and lack of timely rain, which resulted in low yields in 2023 adding to severe food insecurity and worsening the already dire economic situation. On the 31st of May 2023, teachers in Rumbek East, Lakes State went on strike due to delay of salaries, as well as less amount than promised. Learners were involved in mass protests complaining about the situation to which teachers

were being subjected and they had not been taught since schools reopened for the second term. Seven teachers suspected of being ringleaders, (three of whom were from the SCI-supported schools) were arrested. In addition, the Ministry of Education in Lakes State introduced screening of unqualified teachers in schools, thereby affecting program activities such as joint monitoring and supervision visits to schools and setting up of reading clubs as there were no teachers to support activities. Although the seven teachers were later released, the State Minister of Education took drastic measures by dismissing the teachers.

According to the UN's OCHA, South Sudan tops the list of most dangerous countries for aid workers in the world, and the humanitarian crisis deepens amid mounting needs. OCHA noted that there were 40 attacks on aid workers recorded this year, the highest number of attacks against aid workers, according to the 2023 Aid Worker Security Report.

Children in South Sudan continue to face series of challenges, such as poverty, conflict, food insecurity, displacement, child marriage, and lack of infrastructure and resources affecting their safety and education. More than 2.8 million children, according to UNICEF, are out of school in South Sudan and girls especially are disadvantaged as only one in ten girls manage to complete primary education.

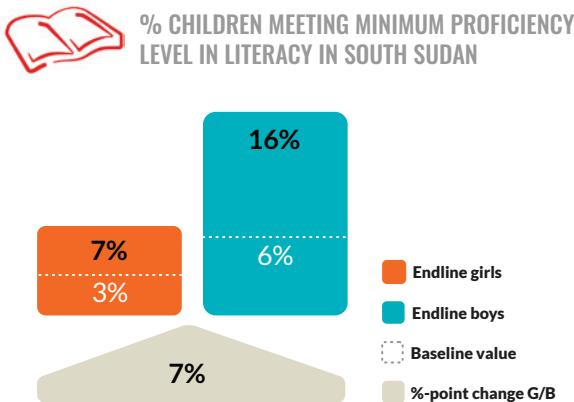
Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

The enrolment of students did not meet the set target for the project endline, with a 7% drop in enrolment for both boys and girls from the midline due to the food security situation and delay in payment of teacher salaries. However, for children with disabilities (CwDs), the retention rate was 100%, signalling a 44% increase in enrolment figures from 171 (60G, 11B) at baseline to 240(152B, 88G) at endline.

The program saw very promising results on students' learning achievement assessment, with the percentage of learners able to read fluently and comprehend a story increasing from 5% to 12% across the project period. Proficiency in basic addition and subtraction increased from 12% to 25%. The learning assessment results are also encouraging across the five levels of reading skills, with the percentage of Grade 3 students not being able to recognize a letter reduced from 22% to 3% and the percentage of students who are able to read a word and paragraph increased significantly. This indicates that the MoGEI-led Teacher Professional Development (TPD) program delivered to teachers in the NORAD project is working, with learning taking place. The NORAD Framework Project has played a pivotal role in improving teachers' capacity. The midterm review revealed that teachers who demonstrated professional teaching practices with greater than

75% competency scores increased from 36% to 59%, while those with competency scores below 75% decreased from 63.5% to 41%. The shift represents an improvement in the teaching practice competencies e.g. Teaching Methodology, Lesson Plan/Scheme of work, etc.



In terms of safety, a total of 81% (508 out of 631) learners surveyed expressed feeling well and secure within their schools. This marks a notable increase from 59% at the midterm and a substantial improvement from the baseline figure of 36%. Similarly, there was a significant decrease in the incidence of physical punishment among children attending school in the past 12 months, dropping from 56% in the baseline to 30%.

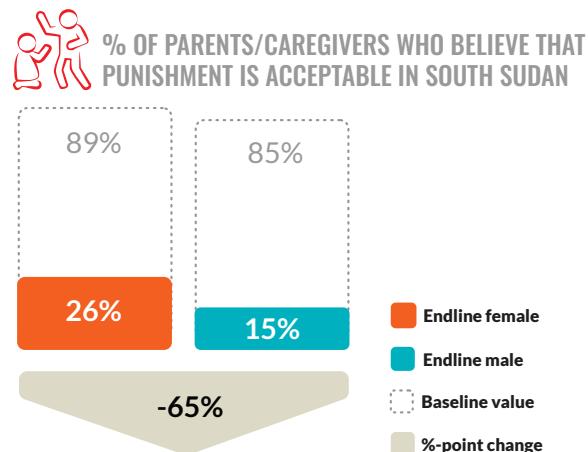
Further, at system level, the NORAD Framework project engaged Government Ministries inclusive of the national defense force in adopting the Safe Schools Declaration for a safe learning environment free from occupation by armed military groups and forces. This culminated in the contextualization of the guidelines, approval, and launching of the South Sudan Safe Schools Declaration Guidelines with Government, implementing partners, teachers, and PTAs. The need for Disaster Risk Reduction policies in the country and in education system was tabled as an advocacy issue with follow-up to be made by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MoGEI). In terms of immediate concrete results, in December 2021, the program successfully managed to establish a Civil-Military Monitoring Committee in Rumbek constituting Government departments such as the MoGEI, Defense forces, Prisons, and Wildlife to spearhead negotiations with the school occupants for free learning environments.

The program supported the Education Cluster with technical, financial, and logistical support. Save the Children and in particular the NORAD Education team members are co-leads of the Education Cluster in both Bor and Rumbek, and the program managed to conduct and support all cluster monthly meetings, provided resources for meetings, and facilitated Back to School campaigns, Girls Education commemorations, and other needs required by the cluster

and the State MoGEI. Save the Children attended the General Annual Education Review meetings held in Juba, Bor, and Rumbek and brought together all education stakeholders and development partners to deliberate on education at the State and national levels.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

The child protection component was an integral part of the education component and was implemented in and around the same schools supported. The project endline survey depicted that those children who benefited from the project demonstrated increased confidence, psychosocial well-being, and communication skills. According to the findings, 83% of children assessed showed positive outcomes on these indicators such as confidence, well-being, and communication quality.



In 2019, the Parenting without Violence (PwV) Common Approach (which has been renamed the Safe Families Common Approach) was adopted focusing on reducing physical and humiliating punishment of children as well as improving parent/caregiver's capacity to exercise positive parenting. At the end line, 67% of children aged 1-17 years experienced physical punishment & /or psychological aggression by parents/caregivers in the past month. This represents a 33%-points improvement from the baseline (100%). Trained parents will continue to use these skills long after the program to rear their children. However, 23% still endorse the use of physical punishment. This percentage represents a significant drop from the 88% reported in the baseline 2019 survey. In addition, 91% of parents or caregivers interviewed reported having gotten better at knowing, thinking, and doing things to stop children from getting hurt at the end line. This is an improvement of 21.5% from 69.5% during baseline. This great achievement was due to the combined efforts of the community-based child protection networks, the PwV common approach, and the continuous engagement of project teams with communities on child protection and child rights messaging.

The community-based protection mechanisms strengthened, coordinated, and functional in responding to violence against children. The program established, trained, and supported 32 Community Based Child Protection Networks (CBCPSS) with a membership of 260 (170 males and 90 females). These CBCPNs supported the child protection system in identifying cases and referrals to child protection actors for response. Comprehensive case management was one of the integral components of the project. Accordingly, the program has assisted 1,967 cases (1058 boys & 909 girls) of vulnerable and at-risk children including 158 (88 boys and 70 girls) with disabilities. To equip the project teams with knowledge and skills in comprehensive case management, 23 (11 males and 12 females) caseworkers and CP officers were trained on standard operating procedures, principles, and processes as well as the national vulnerability criteria and their applicability in project target locations. 53.1% of child protection cases reported were responded to by CP mechanisms and 58% of the community Child protection mechanisms are active in reporting and referring Child Protection cases.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

SC has engaged partners and stakeholders to influence the State and other key actors to implement, promote, and protect child rights. The joint efforts of all CSOs in collaboration with government line ministries as brought together by Save the Children, led to the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 24 February 2023 and the National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC) was as well finalized and successfully launched in April 2022, paving the way for more effective coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and implementation of the UNCRC, the ACRWC, and the Child Act. SCI and our partners trained and supported CSOs to understand and use legal instruments such as UNCRC and South Sudan Child Act and conducted joint advocacy and lobbying and child rights programming. These initiatives improved the ability of CSOs to contribute towards the preparation of both a child-led and child-informed CSOs supplementary report to the UNCRC, and a child-informed supplementary report to the Universal Period Review (UPR) report.

SCI and our partners aimed to ensure that children's child-centered social accountability groups effectively bring child rights issues to the attention of duty bearers for necessary action and accountability. We supported both children and adults in the CCSA groups to collect data on the delivery of services for children. The issues identified were discussed with duty bearers in dialogue meetings and 50% of the recommended action points (14 out of 28) were implemented by the government. Findings indicate that 18 out of 19 capacity enhancement milestones, accounting for 95%, were successfully

achieved by the six partners (ACDF, TOCH, SAADO, CEF, CRC and DARD) responsible for implementing the Norad Program in Bor and Rumbek counties. Two children (1 boy & 1 girl) attended the 2022 Africa Children's Parliament along AU heads of State summit held in Zambia. Such platforms have enabled children to have a voice on matters that affect them and hold duty-bearers to account.

Challenges and deviations: Climate change, insecurity, Covid-19, and intercommunal violence and food insecurity were some of the challenges that affected program implementation. The Covid-19 pandemic had devastating impacts on learning as schools had to be closed for long period of time and alternative ways of addressing the challenges had to be adopted. The pandemic, moreover, had impact on various planned trainings, meetings, and advocacy initiatives as part of the program. Inter-communal violence and floodings, especially in Bor, caused temporary closure of schools. Suspension of school feeding program by WFP had impact on school attendance and on efforts to reduce dropouts. The other challenge was a conflict of interest among key stakeholders in addressing the issue of the child marriageable age petition. The project coordinated stakeholders and nominated the Human Rights Commission to lead the engagements. The budget allocated for children in the national budget in all the ministries and other government structures remains very low in most cases, and it cannot address children's issues. However, in 2022, the legislative assembly pushed through the highest increase in the education budget ever in South Sudan, after the speaker of parliament and respective parliamentary groups had a face-to-face meeting with child parliament supported by Save the Children and the Norad program. The constant change of Government officials, which derails program continuity and progress worth mentioning among the challenges faced.

RISK ANALYSIS

In areas like Rumbek, insecurity posed a significant challenge, requiring a delicate balance between program objectives and beneficiary safety. Engaging local authorities and community leaders helped mitigate risks while fostering community collaboration. Meanwhile, in the Bor region, frequent flooding disrupted school accessibility, prompting the construction of raised platforms and dykes to ensure schools remained operational. Road safety campaigns and safe zones around schools were established to address risks associated with children's commutes. Inclusivity challenges were also addressed as initial project aspects inadvertently neglected children with disabilities; retrofitting infrastructure and providing disability-inclusive training for staff were critical steps. Despite unexpected consequences such as increased security measures posing barri-

ers to community engagement and climate-related disruptions causing interruptions in education, positive outcomes emerged. Increased awareness of disability issues prompted community-led initiatives for inclusivity, while climate-resilient infrastructure had positive spillover effects beyond the project scope. Overall, the program's comprehensive risk management approach, adaptability, community engagement, inclusivity measures, and environmental consciousness were essential in navigating challenges and achieving its objectives in child protection, education, and community development.

LEASSONS LEARNED

Establishing and maintaining trustful relationships with local authorities and other agencies such as Civil Society Organizations was foundational for successful project implementation; regular monitoring and supervision played a pivotal role in project success, ensuring adherence to project plans and maintaining a high standard of quality in service delivery; community engagement was a cornerstone of successful project implementation, fostering ownership, ensuring cultural relevance, and enhancing sustainability; having well-developed contingency plans and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) was indispensable in navigating unforeseen challenges; building a robust network with external stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, and community leaders, contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the context, and facilitated collaborative efforts; tailoring the project design to meet the specific needs of the beneficiaries was foundational for impact; exploring remote and hard-to-reach areas yielded positive results, highlighting the importance of extending efforts to neglected communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

The teacher training component stands as a cornerstone for sustained impact, equipping educators with enhanced skills and strategies; training community mentors on children's sessions and safeguarding policies empowered community members and established advocacy networks for child protection; infrastructure development, including Temporary Learning Spaces and latrines, enhanced physical educational facilities, and learning environment; advocacy efforts and capacity strengthening for Civil Society Organizations aimed to create an enabling environment for sustained change; integration with government systems ensured alignment with ongoing programs and policy influence for sustainability, robust monitoring and evaluation systems facilitated adaptive management and provided evidence for future funding; knowledge management and documentation facilitated retention and sharing of valuable insights for fundraising and advocacy.

UGANDA



Girl solving a math problem at school in Uganda.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

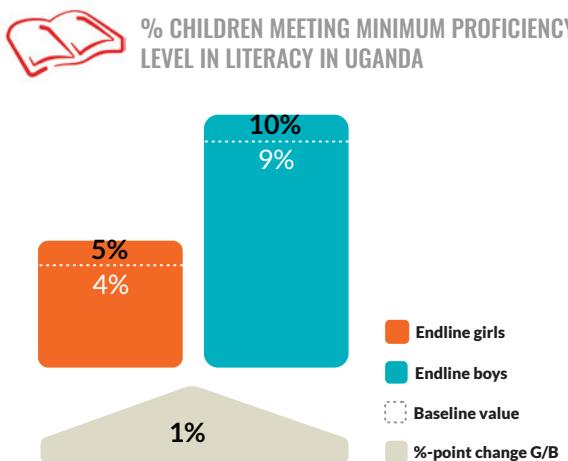
Context update

Uganda had the longest closure of schools in the World (83 weeks) due to the Covid-19 pandemic between 2021 and 2022, which resulted in a significant learning gap, particularly for lower primary learners (grades 1-3). Even in 2023, the disruption persisted as teachers struggled with a bridged curriculum designed by the National Curriculum Development Centre to help students catch up on missed learning content. The pandemic had an unprecedented impact on education systems, exacerbated by a lack of educational technology resources. Additionally, Covid-19 exposed children to protection issues, including child pregnancies and other violations of child rights. Moreover, in 2022, the Karamoja region experienced a long dry season, which continued into 2023, leading to severe hunger. Many communities in Karamoja faced acute food insecurity, and households lacked essential resources for livelihoods and coping. Consequently, children in Karamoja struggled to attend school regularly due to insufficient meals provided by households and schools. The food crisis remains a significant challenge, affecting children's attendance and learning. The agriculture-based school feeding programs supported by Save the Children were severely disrupted by the prolonged drought seasons in Karamoja. Regarding security, most parts of Uganda remained stable, except for the Karamoja region. This area continued to experience pockets of insecurity due to cattle rustlers and government disarmament exercises. Insecurity in Karamoja significantly impacted program implementation, leading to temporary closures of community schools in some areas. Community engagement meetings and campaigns were also disrupted in isolated Karamoja communities.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

The programme successfully increased enrolment by 18% to 48,864 despite the combined crisis of famine and school closure. This positive result can be mainly attributed to programme interventions such as the annual safe back-to-school campaigns and the construction and expansion of 23 new and 19 renovated learning spaces/classrooms and 24 WASH facilities that enabled schools to accommodate more learners. In terms of improving the quality of education, the programme focused on enhancing teachers' capacity for effective teaching and learning. As a result, many teachers now use knowledge-based, inclusive, and child-centered methods. 88.4% of teachers in programme schools can apply holistic learning approaches that promote inclusivity. This positive change is attributed to the combined use of Save the Children's approaches, including Literacy and Numeracy Boost, the Special Needs Action Pack (SNAP), and the Teachers Development Program (TPD) which supports teachers in developing individual capacity development plans through a 50:30:20 model of self-centered learning, peer support, and workshop-based training.



Challenges and deviations: Due to the challenging situation with food insecurity and school closure, the improvement in teachers' capacity has not yet translated into improved students' learning achievement with literacy proficiency levels in local language increasing only from 6% at baseline to 7% at endline. Learners from programme schools in Karamoja performed better in literacy at 10% compared to their counterparts in Northern Uganda at 1%. The numeracy achievement results are more encouraging, with the proportion of learners who are proficient in numeracy increased from 18% (M 20%, F 16%) at baseline to 24% (M 30%, F 18%) at endline against the 25% endline target. Still the numeracy profi-

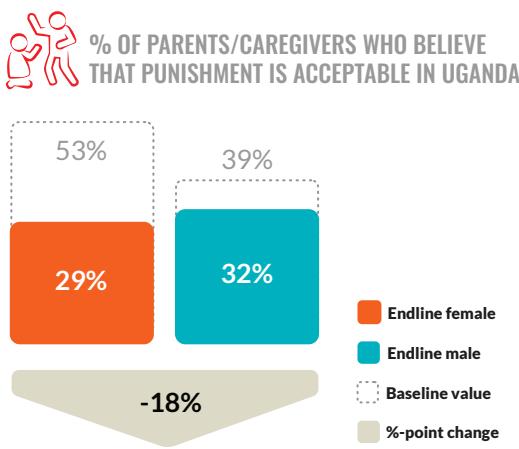
ciency level was high amongst learners in Karamoja at 33% as compared to Northern Uganda at 16%. The difference in performance here can be attributed to the contextual environment in Karamoja that was conducive for home learning and other Covid-19 adapted learning interventions.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: The endline results show that the percentage of learners who feel safe at school increased from 41% at baseline to 69% at endline. The improvement in safe learning environment is largely attributed to the continuous awareness raising among the schools' administrations and learners on the potential hazards and vulnerabilities and the need to develop individual school risk mitigation plans. The endline results indicate that the proportion of schools with functional risk informed school improvement plan increased from 33% at baseline to 98% at endline. Also, children knowledge and skills attained on natural/man-made hazards and violence increased from 41% (M 43%, F 42%) at baseline to 78% (M 80%, F 76%) at endline. However, there was an increase in the use of corporal punishment by teachers from 46% learners reported being physically punished at endline compared to 44% pupils at base line. To address the challenges of low learning achievement, teachers' use of corporal punishment, and low teachers' motivation and capacity, the new phase of the NORAD programme will continue with implementing a full rollout of the Teacher Professional Development (TPD) component. During this framework period, the new TPD approach was adapted midway in 2022 and did not have adequate time for full delivery of continuous teacher mentoring support and building head teachers' capacity as coaches. The content of training will also integrate new catch-up and remedial learning approaches for teachers to effectively address the varying abilities and needs of learners in the same classroom.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

The program facilitated the re-enrollment of girls affected by child marriages and teenage pregnancies, increasing from 91 in 2019 to 690 by 2023. The dropout rate due to child marriage or teenage pregnancy decreased from 3% to 2%, despite school closures during the Covid 19 pandemic. Safe back-to-school campaigns targeted teenage mothers for reintegration into formal education, alongside the popularization of national re-entry guidelines and mental health support services provided in collaboration with partners. Additionally, the programme educated 34,365 adolescents (boys 13,746; girls 20,619) on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR), significantly increasing knowledge levels. Improved ASRHR knowledge is attributed to senior teachers delivering regular

ASRHR and life skills sessions guided by School Family Initiative (SFI) resources, alongside ASRHR community outreaches supported by qualified health workers. Furthermore, the programme introduced the Parenting without Violence Common Approach to combat physical and humiliating punishment (PHP) against children contributing to a change in parents and caregivers' support of using PHP, with a reduction from 48% (M: 39%/F: 53) at BL to 30% (F: 29%/M: 32%) at EL. When looking at the number of reporting to have experienced PHP, this was reduced with 7%-points from the BL at 89% (F: 90% / M: 87%).



The program further strengthened the capacity of both national and community-based child protection mechanisms that support the prevention and response to cases of violence against children. This included the rollout of the Para Social Workers (PSW) structure as provided for under the National Child Policy. The program trained and strengthened capacity of a total of 434 (M 102; F 332) PSWs from four sub counties for enhanced and coordinated response to child protection case identification, reporting and referral. This contributed to an increased proportion of community child protection mechanisms that actively report and refer child protection cases from 42% at baseline to 50% at endline. The case response rate by child protection mechanisms also increased from 22% (M 13%, F 33%) at baseline to 58% (M 50%, F 66%) at Endline.

Challenges and deviations: The Covid-19 global pandemic, affected the overall achievements of the program. In addition, a lack of a well-coordinated and harmonized child protection system resulted in inadequate child protection case identification, reporting and referral. Future child protection programming should embrace a system strengthening approach as provided for under the National Child Policy 2020 to build a strong and well-coordinated child protection system to prevent and respond to violence against children.

Learnings or insights gained after the End-Line data collection: The EL results from the positive parenting work clearly demonstrates that while attitudes are starting to shift, behavioural change lags behind.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

SCI and partners enhanced children's participation in decision-making at community, school, and district levels. Through capacity building in child rights clubs and councils, 1,213 boys and 1,381 girls advocated for their rights by project's end. Additionally, SCI and partners bolstered CSOs' ability to hold the government accountable for child rights monitoring and reporting, leading to two child-informed reports submitted to ACERWC and UPR. Children also contributed a report to CRPD, highlighting gaps in education, protection, and health. SCI's technical support and advocacy influenced the passing of the Prevention and Prohibition of Human Sacrifice Act in 2020 and the approval of the National Child Policy. Collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development facilitated the dissemination of the National Child Policy to nine districts and the rollout of the End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy Strategy in Eastern and Northern districts.

Moreover, SCI and partner UDN's advocacy and capacity building led to increased financing for education and health programs at district levels over five years.

Challenges and deviations: Funding child protection remains a challenge and impacts on child rights in the country.

There is still a need to Strengthen advocacy work on influencing both national and local governments in prioritizing resource allocations to critical institutions and sectors mandated to uplift the wellbeing and rights of children. Furthermore, there is a need to strengthen partnerships and collaboration with civil society organizations at both national and district level to influence advocacy around public investment in children.

RISK ANALYSIS

The effects of Covid-19 had profound impact on the entire program. Most schools-based interventions were paused during the lockdown. The pandemic narrowed down child protection and children rights programming spaces as most of the planned coordination and engagement meeting with stakeholders and duty bearers were not permissible. Despite numerous programming adjustment made to mitigate the impact of Covid-19, the repercussions were bold and consequential, leading to: lost learning and program failure to achieve the intended learning outcomes, high teachers' attrition rate and reduced morale of teacher to continue with their teaching profession. Moreover, pandemic has led to a rise in child marriage and teenage pregnancy. The rise of

this is largely attributed to weak and poorly coordinated child protection systems. Furthermore, the government's failure to transition program-supported community schools in Karamoja to government-aided status posed a significant risk to program sustainability. Additionally, between 2022 and 2023, the risk of hunger became a reality, particularly in the Karamoja sub-region. This ongoing hunger crisis has been a major obstacle to regular school attendance and learning for children in the area, as well as hindering their participation in programme activities. Many program schools lack the resources to provide and maintain midday meals for their students. Another major risk for the program were the increased insecurity in Karamoja stemming from government disbarment efforts and cattle rustling by the Karamojong warriors. The heightened security incidents in 2022 led to disruptions in program implementation in certain communities, prompting some program-supported learning centers to relocate for safety reasons.

LESSONS LEARNED

The next framework should utilize common education approaches such as Enabling Teachers, Literacy Boost, and Numeracy Boost to design a Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) program. This initiative aims to support teachers in acquiring relevant competencies while addressing their motivation. Collaboration with the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education (UNITE) is essential to ensure that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) modules are certified and align with the National Teacher Policy (NTP). The Covid-19 adapted education interventions have shown improvement in learning outcomes. Therefore, the next framework should prioritize remedial learning to help learners catch up, especially those facing marginalization and discrimination.

Integrating Norad schools with pre-schools could enhance learner preparation and facilitate smoother transitions. Community reading clubs significantly contribute to literacy proficiency. Strengthening these clubs in the next programming phase can accelerate children's learning outcomes. The previous Norad framework primarily targeted learners from grades 1 to 3, limiting progression beyond grade 3. Adopting a "whole school approach" can bridge transition gaps and promote inclusive learning for all grades. Barriers to inclusive education persist. Prioritizing inclusion in the next programming phase is essential to ensure equitable access to learning for children with disabilities. School feeding programs significantly impact learner enrolment and attendance. Integrating school feeding components can enhance regular attendance and learning outcomes.

The program has bolstered CSO collective advocacy in Karamoja and Northern Uganda, enhancing

child rights monitoring and reporting. Strengthening CSO coalitions and partnerships should remain a priority in the next framework to further advance Child Rights and Gender (CRG) initiatives.

SUSTAINABILITY

The NORAD framework 2019–2023's sustainability relies on Save the Children's focus on partnership, localization, institutional building, systems strengthening, and advocacy. The program enhanced the capacity and functionality of local community structures, including local council leadership, school governance bodies (PTA/SMCs), Community Mobilization Teams (CMT), child wellbeing committees, and para-social workers, to advocate for children's rights post-transition.

In education, teachers from program-supported schools will continue to improve teaching and learning through various capacity enhancement interventions. Collaborating with Uganda Debt Network (UDN) and Forum for Education NGOs in Uganda (FENU), the program achieved advocacy milestones for government ownership of community schools in Karamoja. Investments in physical learning environments, such as classroom construction and WASH facilities, will encourage stakeholders to lobby for increased advocacy for teacher deployment and motivation, facilitating full government transition of community schools.

The program strengthened child protection structures and the social welfare workforce, ensuring continued addressing of child protection and well-being issues post-2024. Community mobilization campaigns against child marriage, teenage pregnancies, and violence against children fostered positive attitudes, with communities ready to sustain these efforts. Additionally, the program empowered child rights clubs/councils in schools to engage stakeholders and advocate for children's rights at national and local government levels. CSO coalitions, equipped with requisite skills on children's rights reporting, will continue to advocate for children's rights and contribute to treaty body reports on children's rights development.

MIDDLE EAST

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

Between 2020 and 2023, SCN has gradually improved the development of Country Engagement Plans (CEP) in our region. Focus during this period has been on how the CEPs are developed and applied as a planning and engagement tool by SCN. Being a guide to articulate our overall annual commitments, the CEPs have contributed to streamline our engagement with the country offices in Lebanon and Palestine. When necessary, annual priorities set in the CEPs have been adapted to major changes in the political and economic landscape. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the CEPs were dominated by adjustments to plans and commitments. To foster ownership of CEPs at country office level, SCN has involved Senior Management Team leads (programme and operations) in both Palestine and Lebanon to frame key areas of support. Due to strong linkages with SIDA and DANIDA funded programmes, Nordic cooperation has been prioritised throughout the whole period. In addition, we have used the CEPs to agree on ways of working with the COs to ensure proper planning, progress monitoring and reporting. As part of CEPs, there have been annual Nordic meetings convening staff members from Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Key roles attending have been Area Directors, Country Portfolio Managers and Thematic Advisers. These have been mostly face to face (F2F) in Sweden but done remotely during Covid-19. In addition, there have been regular Nordic calls discussing our engagement throughout the Middle East region, including Lebanon and Palestine.

There have also been regular Nordic meetings with Lebanon and Palestine country offices, mostly attended by Area Directors, but also Country Portfolio Managers and thematic advisers have joined from time to time. When possible, annual meetings with the country offices were held face to face and combined with field visits meetings with a broad range of partners and other stakeholders. The purpose of the Nordic collaboration has been to align program priorities and technical support and to actively engage with the senior leadership team on strategic direction, contextual developments, and operational challenges. When possible, Nordic visits are timed around Country Consultation Group meetings, where a broader part of senior program and advocacy staff from across the Save the Children movement attend. Due to Covid-19 and conflict escalations, these broader F2F meetings are not taking place as frequently as they used to. Main shared priorities for Nordic members include civil society and localisation, child rights and advocacy.

In Lebanon, SC Norway has had a particular focus on cost efficiency and dialogue with the senior

management team included in the CEPs during this NORAD period. In 2020, the country office adjusted its salary scale and performed a job evaluation where all job descriptions were revised to accurately reflect the job responsibilities of each position, to ensure staffing structure is efficient and better supporting program implementation. By comparing with other peer organisations working in Lebanon, and based on the Birches salary scale, SCI's scale was placed in the medium percentile. In 2021, the country office implemented a broad range of initiatives following their organisational restructuring (of COOM - Country Office Operating Model). This included project resourcing for improved coordination and follow up of programs, and cost efficiency initiatives such as framework agreements with suppliers to ensure better prices and timelier implementation of programme activities.

Thematic priorities for SCN in the region remain education and child rights governance. Child Protection has been integrated to address growing protection concerns as well as interconnected barriers related to education, such as child labour and early marriage which often causes schools dropouts. Program based advocacy is an integral part of SCN priorities, which contributes to advance the Children in Armed Conflict (and CAFAAG) agenda in Palestine and Lebanon. Through the CEP, Save the Children Norway supported the Palestine office in virtual launches of report including "Danger is our Reality: The Impact of the Conflict and the Occupation on Education in the West Bank" and organized virtual round tables together with Norwegian NGOs on key child rights violation in Palestine. During course of the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme, strengthening partnership has been a focus, especially in Lebanon where SCN has technically supported capacity building of local humanitarian and development organizations, to support the increasing need for nexus programming. Moreover, learnings from the programme indicate the value of employing a community-based approach. In fragile contexts as in Palestine and Lebanon, community-based structures have the potential to serve as alternative to learning and child protection services when crises occur. To bolster meaningful child participation across our programmes in the region, SCN's Senior Adviser for Child Participation supported a study (under the NORAD funded programme) in Lebanon and Guatemala. The objective of the study was to examine children's own perception of their participation in our programmes. Upon completion, SCN organised a workshop in Norway in October 2023, to facilitate exchange of technical expertise and to gain new insights from the results which can be applied in our organisation. Due to the Gaza conflict, staff from Lebanon participated virtually.

LEBANON



Girls participation in Lebanon.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

In Lebanon, a convergence of challenges, including economic decline, political stagnation, the Beirut blast in 2020, the impact of Covid-19, the ongoing Syrian conflict, and the Gaza conflict has given rise to an intricate and deeply concerning humanitarian crisis. This situation is further intensified by the breakdown of public services and the absence of adequate social safety nets. The repercussions of this crisis are widespread, affecting not only Lebanese citizens but also refugee and migrant communities.

Furthermore, in July 2023, armed clashes broke out in Ein El Helwe Camp– Saida and witnessed multiple escalations. The worsening security and political conditions within the camp, coupled with persistent risks, had devastating effects on the camp residents overall, particularly impacting the education sector. This led to the destruction and occupation of United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools by armed groups, rendering other educational facilities inaccessible, even in the nearby areas.

The Gaza-Israel war has a significant impact throughout Lebanon at various levels. It has triggered a notable wave of displacement among affected people in the southern suburbs of Beirut and the South of Lebanon. At the end of 2023, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) officially closed 30 schools in the South and Nabatieh, denying students' access to education at the beginning of the academic year and exacerbating learning losses incurred over the last four years of interrupted education. While some schools shifted to remote learning, ensuring continuous learning for children remains exceedingly challenging. Additionally, public schools in areas hosting internally dis-

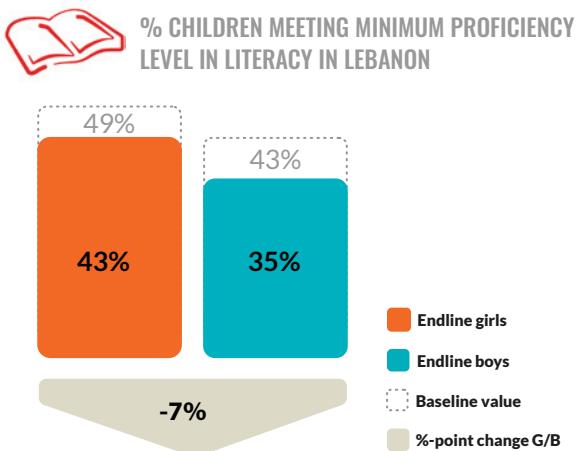
placed children are facing challenges in enrolling and retaining children in school.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

The program is structured to adopt a comprehensive, multi-sectoral strategy grounded in the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It takes a multi-sectoral integrated approach with the underlying basis being the CRC. It aims at improving access and retention to quality education, safety, and wellbeing of children. The main component is education, with a focus on quality, inclusivity, and a protective environment conducive to improved learning outcomes and well-being. The overall objective of the program is strengthening civil society capacity to better respond to the rights of refugee children in Palestinian camps to learning in safe and protective environment. This program was implemented in partnership with the following local partners: Tadamon, Nabaa, PWHO, and Manara Network.

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

From 2019 to 2023, Save the Children (SC), in partnership with local organizations (NABAA, TADAMON, and PWHO), provided education and child protection services to children in Palestinian camps. The program navigated through the Covid-19 pandemic by transitioning from face-to-face to remote learning and back, ensuring continuity of education for the most vulnerable children.



Key achievements during this period include the consistent delivery of Early Childhood Education (ECE), with a stable completion rate over three years. The Retention Support (RS) and Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) programs supported children in achieving higher learning outcomes. Teachers' capacity was bolstered through training and refresher sessions, and the integration of master

teachers played a pivotal role in professional development, with teachers' performance improving by 22%. The program also saw a transformative shift in caregiver engagement, particularly among fathers, fostering a nurturing environment for children.

For child and youth resilience (CYR), children experienced significant positive transformations. The program resulted in increased stress management skills, enhanced self-confidence, and the empowerment of children to openly address life challenges. Under case management, positive outcomes included significant reductions in child labor, improved family relationships, and enhanced well-being as per case review.

However, the program faced challenges. The economic crisis led to increased child labor and early marriage, impacting education continuity. The formal education system suffered from prolonged school closures and teacher strikes, severely affecting learning outcomes. UNRWA schools, while not closed, reported overcrowded classrooms and declining teacher performance. The cancellation of the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) left a gap in the transition pathway to formal education for refugee children. Prolonged school closures and teacher strikes are also seen as main reasons for learning achievements in literacy showing a negative trend from 46% at baseline to 39% at endline.

Learnings gained after the end line data collection highlighted the need for continued education retention support which takes into consideration the lost learning hours due to school closures and overcrowded classrooms. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) also recommended enhancing and expand RS to reach more vulnerable children, and equipping partner centers with libraries to foster independent reading.

The program also adapted to respond to the escalating crises in Lebanon by implementing mental health psychosocial support for children and caregivers, delivering child and youth resilience sessions, and raising awareness about child protection risks. A social behavioural change strategy was developed, identifying community leaders to advocate against child marriage, labour, and violence.

Persistent staff turnover among partners and the high cost of assistive devices due to budget constraints were additional challenges. Nonetheless, the program's comprehensive approach contributed to improved family dynamics and overall well-being, demonstrating the program's resilience and adaptability in a challenging context.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

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Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

From 2019 to 2023, Save the Children's program focused on child participation, leading to significant improvements in children's self-confidence, communication, and understanding of their rights. This empowerment enabled them to engage effectively with decision-makers and advocate for their rights. A key achievement was the establishment of an Alliance of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in 2019, which successfully advocated for children's rights, particularly in response to the impact of the Gaza war on children's mental health.

Children actively participated in consultations and contributed to alternative reports to the CRC, with training provided to enhance their data collection skills. The program's emphasis on participatory action research (PAR) allowed children to explore issues such as education, early marriage, and climate change, leading to practical initiatives like psychological support for unemployed youth.

In 2023, children from the program participated in a regional discussion with the UN Special Representative on Violence against Children, influencing a report on creating a secure digital environment for children. The "Kids Power" committee's work culminated in a report on children's participation, and the development of a board game to raise awareness about children's rights in education and protection programs.

The program also addressed climate change by developing a child-friendly toolkit, which increased children's engagement in environmental advocacy. Partnerships with local organizations like Tadamon, Nabaa, and PWHO were instrumental in implementing the program, with 58% of capacity enhancement milestones met.

However, the program faced challenges, including difficulties in advocacy follow-up, limited children's participation due to safety concerns, and economic hardships forcing children to work. To address these challenges, children proposed increasing advocacy sessions, organizing parent sessions on critical issues, and providing financial support to combat child labor and marriage. Despite these challenges, the program made substantial progress in empowering children and enhancing their ability to advocate for their rights.

RISK ANALYSIS

Political and Security Instability in Palestinian Camps: The volatile situation led to the adoption of remote modalities for education and communication. SC developed a risk reduction plan, maintained coordination with community leaders, and provided emergency training and psychological first aid to staff.

Male Caregiver Disengagement: To increase male caregiver participation in children's education and

protection, SC adjusted the timing of sessions to suit their availability.

Child Labor and Drug Abuse: The economic downturn resulted in a rise in child labor and drug abuse. SC's case management team developed tailored action plans, provided cash for protection, and conducted follow-ups that led to positive outcomes. Awareness sessions on child labor were also held at the community level.

Educational Disruptions from Teachers' Strikes: Strikes led to a demand for non-formal education (NFE) and disrupted the transition from NFE to formal education (FE). SC expanded the Retention Support (RS) activity to accommodate more students, aiming to bridge the educational gap caused by the strikes.

War in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The conflict posed risks to education activities in Lebanon's Southern areas, where SC's partner centers are located. SC initiated education emergency training and psychological first aid for staff, established communication channels for updates, and equipped partner centers with emergency preparedness measures, including First Aid kits and safe rooms.

LESSONS LEARNED

Retention Support (RS) Revision: The education sector's approach to RS needs standardization across partners to meet children's diverse needs effectively. This could include differentiated tracks for catch-up programming, remedial support, and homework assistance. SC should contribute to developing standardized guidance and analyse RS results to better assess and address children's needs.

Evidence-Based Interventions: SC should consider evidence-based approaches like Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) for focused literacy and numeracy interventions. Analysing RS outcomes can inform future designs, ensuring they are tailored to foundational learning needs.

Out-of-School Children (OOSC) and Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN): SC must continue advocating for child-centered education and NFE reforms, ensuring the voices of local partners are heard, especially in areas with fewer Syrian refugees. Grouping students by learning level rather than age can enhance outcomes.

Teacher Professional Development: Training on remote teaching methods, teacher well-being, gender-positive practices, and support for children with learning and behavioural challenges is crucial.

Stakeholder Communication: Coordinating with UNRWA on a school-by-school basis is necessary

due to strategic engagement challenges. SC recommends building strong communication with local partners to foster collaboration and avoid effort duplication.

Organizational Capacity Building: Enhancing partners' proposal writing and funding source diversification is essential for program sustainability. Comprehensive capacity development should address organizational and programmatic aspects.

Child Protection (CP) Integration: Cost-effective solutions for assistive devices and inclusive space creation are necessary. Caregivers' committees should be involved in CP principle advocacy within communities.

Children's Rights Implementation: Establishing Child Youth Committees ensures inclusive participation and effective activity monitoring. Engaging children in consultations and decision-making processes is vital for their rights advocacy.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the program's results is anchored in the capacity development of local partners, community structures, and the establishment of systems that ensure the continuity of child learning and protection initiatives. **Partnerships with local NGOs** have been strengthened to continue addressing educational and child protection needs post-program. These partnerships, alongside the empowerment of teachers, school management, and child rights clubs, are pivotal in sustaining the project's outcomes.

Community centers have been equipped with story libraries, fostering a sustainable environment for children to develop literacy skills. Participatory action research (PAR) has been instrumental in understanding child rights issues and informing ongoing community initiatives. The creation of a board game focused on children's rights is another sustainable tool, designed to facilitate long-term learning and active participation in educational and child protection programs.

The **Caregivers Committee's** role has been expanded, with increased collaboration with parents and community members contributing to the resilience of educational efforts. A structured onboarding process for new committee members ensures the sustainability of their activities and initiatives.

The **Alliance of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** has been established to advocate for children's rights with governmental bodies and to secure future funding opportunities. The Higher Council of Childhood's (HCC) engagement with the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) reinforces the commitment to child rights and participation in policy discussions.

The Child and Youth Advisory Committee (CYAC)

has been set up to train and empower young individuals in advocacy and participation, although funding constraints have paused the expansion of this committee. Despite this, SC's commitment to work with the existing committee ensures ongoing impact and advocacy for children's rights.

OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY



Child participation- picture taken in 2020 - oPt.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

The war in Gaza has devastating impact on children's lives. The number of children reported killed in only four weeks in Gaza surpassed the annual number of children killed across the world conflict zones combined since 2019. About 70%, at least 21 600 person (by end of December 2023), of those killed are children including newborns and women. Nearly 1,9 million have been forcefully displaced, with more than one million sheltering in UNRWA and public schools. Lack of food, water and basic survival items are severe, further exacerbating the already dire conditions of displaced Palestinians, and amplifying protection and mental health issues (UNOCHA Flash Update#80). Relentless bombardment and restricted humanitarian access daily increase the risk of famine. By early December 2023, about 2 million were estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity. Extremely poor hygiene in overcrowded shelters caused rapid spread of diseases like diarrhea, threatening the lives of children. Since 7th October 625,000 children in Gaza have had no access to safe education. According to the Education Cluster (Update#12), about 69% of school building have sustained damages (Damaged Schools Interactive Dashboard) with several reports indicating military use of schools including for detention, interrogations and as military base by Israeli forces.

Amidst the war in Gaza, the situation in the West Bank deteriorated with heightened violence by set-

tlers combined with military operations resulting in killings, injuries, and a steep rise in detentions. Movement restrictions and displacements posed challenges to safe access to education in many areas of the West Bank and East Jerusalem affecting at least 782,000 students (Education Cluster Update#12). There has also been an increase in school demolitions in Area C. The escalation in violence exacerbated the pre-existing challenging education situation in the West Bank. Prior to the war, a prolonged teachers strike lasted four months in 2023 which impacted about 1 million students. According to the Education Cluster about 70% of students will need catch-up classes.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Over the course of five years this programme has reached more than 65 000 children. The overarching goal was to improve learning outcomes for children, bolster the civil society to advocate for children's rights as well as strengthen national stakeholders' ability to uphold children's rights. Adaptations have been made to address emerging barriers for children, during escalation in conflict, Covid-19 pandemic coupled with deteriorating economic and political landscape. The results of this programme, have been achieved in collaboration with seven local partners, combined with strategic engagements with the Child Ombudsperson, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), as well as relevant ministries.

Because of school closure followed by the war in Gaza, endline was not possible to carry out. Save the Children, however conducted a study to assess the impact on children, school and communities in the West Bank through key informative interviews. Overall key findings indicated a noticeable improvement in children's academic performance, life skills and wellbeing.

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

This issue aimed at enhancing educational outcomes and the wellbeing of children including children with disabilities (CwDs). A crucial element to improve learning performance among children is capacitating educational staff. This has been done through a set of trainings including on gender sensitive and inclusive education, life skills, positive learning environments and introducing new methods to boost literacy and numeracy development through play-based learning. Findings from the impact study indicate that introducing learning methods through play and art contributed to enhanced classroom participation and students' overall ability to learn. Building capacity of education staff combined with involvement of community members and parents to foster positive learning environment, has been vital catalyst towards the achievements of this programme.

Learning loss resulting from periodic school closure due to the pandemic and teacher's strikes, has been addressed through a successful Remedial Education (RE) programme which was informed by the Mid Term. The RE proved to be impactful with up to 85% improvement in learning, as indicated by data collected from targeted schools. In 2023, following school closure due to prolonged national teachers strike (Jan-April) in the West Bank, SC managed to shift the modality of the RE employing a community-based approach, to ensure continuity of learning. In collaboration with partner Tamer and its existing network of community-based organizations, SC facilitated RE. Children attending these sessions, were nominated by the originally targeted schools. SC encountered challenges with attendance at CBOs which was lower compared to RE sessions delivered at schools. This is attributed to various reason; school closure significantly reduces motivation in school-aged children, some children engage in child labour, but most importantly is the access restrictions. This program has targeted marginalized children residing in areas commonly affected by escalation. SC however persistently worked with parents and community members to motivate and encourage children to attend the sessions.

In the context of protracted crisis, the safety and well-being of children at schools, is crucial to support academic performance. Students who experience well-being are able to develop their potential, learn, enjoy positive relationships with their peers and have a sense of belonging to their school community. As such, the child-friendly and inclusive Code of Conduct, developed with the active participation of children and the support of schools, was by the end of this programme rolled out to all targeted 50 schools, in the West Bank and Gaza respectively. Furthermore, summer camps have been organized focusing on recreational activities in Gaza while in the West Bank these camps supplemented literacy and numeracy support with recreation. Because of the alarming level of psychosocial needs among children in Gaza, the summer camps in 2023 were expanded to reach all 22 targeted UNRWA schools. In total 21,612(11,773F,9839M) children participated at the summer camps in Gaza and the West Bank.

As the war erupted in October 2023, all programme activities in Gaza were suspended. Despite the volatile situation, being displaced and heavily affected by the war, longstanding partner Save Youth Future (SYF) managed to distribute recreational kits to 10 UNRWA schools designated as shelters in Rafah. Additionally, much needed recreational activities to alleviate psychological pressure and trauma were delivered reaching over 5000 displaced children. About 3000 caregivers attended the recreational activities where SYF facilitator also promoted hygiene practices.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse
oPt does not implement issue 2.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented
At the core of this program lies empowering children as catalysts for change. In this regard, SC along with partners have supported the elections and capacitated the Child Councils in the West Bank and Gaza. During this program, the Child Councils have conducted a series of accountability sessions with decision-makers which have led to concrete actions for realization of children's rights. The Ministry of Education formed a working group specifically for the Inclusive Education Strategy and updated its policy on violence reduction in schools, while the Ministry of Social Development raised the issue of child labor to the respective Committee responsible for adapting laws. The marriage age has been raised to 18, as a result of the accountability sessions, and additional advocacy efforts. Following the war in Gaza, representatives of the Child Councils participated in a meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur of Human Rights in the oPt in October 2023, sharing information and influencing SCI's advocacy and communication interventions. While partner Defense for Children Palestine (DCI-P) was able to continue support the Child Council in the West Bank, through activities including recording and disseminating two videos addressing child-rights violations by Israeli military forces, the conflict in Gaza did not permit SC and partner PCHR to engage with the Child Council in Gaza. Most of the child representatives from the Council have been displaced, SC has however been able to reconnect with some of the children.

This programme has invested significantly in strengthening civil society organizations. SC and partners have jointly developed capacity building plans which have been implemented, with 95% of identified capacity milestones being met. Key accomplishments include introduction of child rights to the work of partner PCHR, support to a gender unit at partner al-Marsad which in turn supported other partners streamlining gender. Moreover, SC worked closely with the Maan News Network in developing a code of conduct and ethics for journalists in oPt when covering stories concerning children. The shrinking civic space in oPt remains a challenge. Designation of DCI-P by Israel in late 2021, and the emerging trend of freezing funding to human rights organization following 7 October conflict, is very concerning. In November 2023 Switzerland suspended funding to 11 Palestinian and Israeli NGOs including one of SC's partners under this program, PCHR.

To hold the state accountable to child rights including the rights of children with disabilities in front of international bodies, has been central to the program. One child-informed supplementary report on the implementation of the Child Rights

Convention was submitted to the CRC Committee in June 2019, led by partner DCI-P. Notably, the Committee included about 19 recommendations from this report in its concluding remarks to the State of Palestine, and the government endorsed 92% of the concluding remarks it received. The program also supported the state to submit its report to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, while child councils supported the state to submit its report on the second protocol of the CRC and developed a child-friendly version of the concluding remarks. In support of the inclusive education system, partner Qader for Community Development (Qader), equipped specialized resource center established by the Ministry of Education. To ensure that children with severe and multiple disabilities can gain independence and skills, Qader trained staff at school in Hebron on the MOVE methodology. The MOVE is designed to meet the distinct needs of children with multiple disabilities. Based on a survey conducted among parents, indicated 80% satisfaction with the MOVE programme.

RISK ANALYSIS

Access restrictions and lack of protection of humanitarian personnel in Gaza is a key concern. The volume of aid permitted to enter Gaza from Egypt, remains woefully inadequate. Arbitrary inspection of aid trucks with regular denial of several basic items, by the Israeli military is hampering lifesaving assistance. Humanitarian aid to areas north of Wadi Gaza, where an estimate of between 300,000-450,000 still remain, is nearly absent. While the main road, Salah El-din would be a swift and secure passage for humanitarian aid, a lengthy and overcrowded route along the coastal line is designated for humanitarian convoys by the Israeli military. The war in Gaza has recorded the highest number of UN staff casualties in any conflict, with 144 UN employees killed by end of December. As the ongoing conflict is highly volatile and rapidly evolving, the safety of SC and partner staff remains the highest priority. As mitigation measures, SC's Security and Safety Manager in Gaza is closely coordinating movement and access with the UN and other INGOs. Updated emergency and contingency plans are in place, and evacuation routes are also coordinated.

Shrinking civic space

Israel's use of counter-terrorism strategies is placing constraints on human rights organizations in oPt. The designation of DCI-P in 2021, placed limitation on its work, SC however was able to shift the partnership modality ensuring continued collaboration with DCI. In wake of the current conflict, several governments decided to freeze funding to civil society organizations, including our partner PCHR under the NORAD funded program. This is a result of longstanding campaigns and allegations advanced by

Israel. Restricted funding poses additional risks on civil society organizations already heavily impacted by the conflict. The majority of SC partners in Gaza are currently displaced in south, many have lost their homes, family and staff members, and their offices in northern part of Gaza. In spite of the challenging situation, SC is committed to support our partners. Our partner, PCHR, has been forced to seize its operations, and SC aims to support in restoring their operational capacity enabling the organization to resume its work and continue efforts with the Child Council once a definitive ceasefire is secured.

School closure due to recurrent teachers strikes and Covid-19. Because of the deteriorating economic situation, teachers strike with demands of increased salary are recurrent in oPt, causing disruption of education. School closure during the Covid-19 pandemic also had devastating impact on learning. The impact of such events combined with escalation of violence, have been mitigated by SC and partners through employing digital modalities and social media platforms for communication with children, parents and community. This has enabled SC to some degree continue education and awareness-raising activities during times of school closure. More important, SC has facilitated community-based learning.

LEASONS LEARNED

A valuable lesson learned from the educational programme is applying a community-based approach which can represent an alternative to learning during times of crisis. The involvement of communities and caretakers in mitigating risks and challenges caused by crisis is equally important. Provision of Remedial Education including community based, has proven to be an effective tool to address learning deficits, particularly beneficial for marginalized children. Overall, the protracted crisis in oPt demands flexibility and the ability to adapt programming. As such embedding crisis modifiers while maintaining a robust risk analysis, can support in addressing emerging challenges posed by the interconnected risks of conflict, displacement, political fragility and climate change.

SUSTAINABILITY

At system level, this program has promoted sustaining changes in legislative and policies. A priority investment has been supporting the Ministry of Education in updating and implementing the Inclusive Education Strategy, which seek to ensure that children with disabilities can achieve their full potential. Strengthening civil society organizations (CSOs) will undoubtedly enhance accountability to child rights by duty bearers. As part of the Organizational Capacity Development (OCD) and Technical Capacity Development (TCD) initiatives this programme have applied, focus has been places on inclusion,

gender, child safeguarding and child rights, which have been streamlined within strategy and plans of partners. At the school level, SC have established and capacitated the School Development Committees (SDC), which will remain after the end of this programme. In the West Bank these Committees will continue to implement school improvement plans to support positive learning environment. Although the SDCs in Gaza are currently not functioning, the Committees in West Bank may leverage learnings from initiatives especially related to environmental issues which were piloted by the SDCs in Gaza.

ASIA

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

Save the Children Norway has throughout the programme period worked closely with our sister organizations in Sweden, Denmark, and Finland to coordinate the engagement in Asia. A Nordic Save the Children meeting in Stockholm early 2023 strengthened this cooperation. The different members have used each other project experiences to present to other donors, human resources have been shared where possible, and civil society partners have received support from several Nordic members.

The *Leaving No Child Behind* programme in Nepal is implemented in a region where other members also have projects. The long-term commitment through the Norad funding gives the country office in Nepal a strong presence in Karnali, close contact with government and therefore the opportunity to present other initiatives based on the good relationship SC has. The Country Engagement Plans (CEP) for Nepal have throughout the period enabled SCN to keep being relevant towards the Nepal office and with other stakeholders working in the country, especially throughout the pandemic.

Members across the SC organization had to adapt our work in Myanmar significantly after the coup d'état in 2021. The learning from the lock-down of the country during Covid-19 was essential when finding new ways of working programmatically. SCN has throughout the pandemic and after the coup been adapting our plans towards the country. Two staff members from the Norad-funded programme were killed in a massacre, a tragedy that had implications for the risk management of the implementation in Myanmar. The planned coordination through the CEP enabled SCN to increase the portfolio in Myanmar, including being grantee for the Education Cannot Wait funding. SCN has also been instrumental in connecting other Nordic members closer to the

country office. One such example is the SC Sweden funding to strengthen civil society organization in Myanmar. SCN, with the support from Norad, has stepped up and been a vital support for SC in Myanmar being flexible and supportive based on the ever-changing context in the country, especially during the time Norway had a seat in the UN Security Council.

MYANMAR



Student kits distribution, Hpruso Township in Myanmar.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

The Covid-19 pandemic and political crisis in Myanmar have impacted project activities by halting government engagement and increasing safety risks for program staff and target groups, and limited civic space. Save the Children made adaptations by maintaining community contact, adjusting targeted areas for safety, changing partners, and shifting to community-based strategies to address these challenges and continue project implementations.

Issue 1: Adapting to Covid-19 related restrictions and school closure, the project's approach has changed from school-based education to home-based learning initiatives in 2020. Activities directly supporting the de facto authority-led government were suspended. However, the project continued to engage directly with the community with adaptative design, community-based approach through village education committees and community volunteers. As political crisis and armed conflict that followed in 2021, the project intervention in two townships came to a halt in Magway region and one township in Kayah state (Bawlkhe) and followed the actions as elaborated in risk analysis section.

Issue 2: CP program works at all levels—from the community to the national level—to make positive changes in the lives of children, young people, parents, and caregivers. It also involves capacity

building for related stakeholders, such as parents and government officials. Additionally, program has financially and technically contributed to law enforcement and the development of non-violence parenting resources through technical working groups and collaboration with other child rights-based organizations. Collaboration with partners, including CRG and Education programs, has led to significant achievements in providing the best protection-related services under the NORAD framework agreement. Due to the disruption of the formal child protection system following the coup, informal protection mechanisms were activated at national and sub-national levels, where the SC CP team provided support through the CP-AoR.

Issue 3: CRG activities had originally been designed to promote child rights through strong and sustained engagement with the former civilian government, related institutions (relevant to child rights), and government stakeholders at different levels. The 2021 takeover and the subsequent suspension of engagement significantly hindered many CRG activities. In response, SC together with a core group of other child rights advocates created new private child rights watch group. It monitored and reported child rights violations and conducted regional and international level private advocacy. Because there was very limited space for children and CSO to influence the duty bearers, the program focused more on strengthening the capacity of CSOs and empowering children. Program adaptations and contextualization of approaches facilitated delivering program deliverables and contributing to the progress towards some outcomes achievable in this humanitarian context.

In parallel with adapted programme strategies from 2020 indicators and assessment methodologies were adapted, and quantitative results document change from 2021 to 2023. A particular challenging security situation during midterm assessment in 2021 gave a comparatively small sample size, and results should be read as trends.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

The project initially identified six key outcomes including access, quality, policy engagement, strengthening civil society, school safety, and WASH in school. Due to Covid-19 pandemic and post 2021 political instability a, the project shifted the approach from school-based to community-based education. In general, the project achieved its targets in Access and Quality outcomes through a community-based education (CBE) approach. Despite complex challenges, the project achieved significant results in terms of children's learning and wellbeing in school. The endline evaluation showed a significant progress of 23%-points (G: 20%p; B: 23%p)

in learning outcomes across the three domains of literacy, numeracy, and SEL from 2021 to 2023. The volunteer teachers performed high in teaching practices sustaining a 90% achievement (F: 88%; M: 100%) from 2021 to 2023. However, some pedagogical skills linked to classroom management and disability inclusion were slightly low, referring to a need for providing additional capacity development support in these two specific areas. In addition, the end-line evaluation showed a slight increase of 3%-points (G: 5%p; B: 2%p) regarding children's perception of safety and well-being at the community education sites which is noticeable considering the ongoing conflict and limitations in full implementation of the safe school common approach as initially planned. SCI continued collaboration with 10 OPDs and provided capacity strengthening and home-based learning kits to CWDs. However, the engagement of OPDs in other project activities was not significant as the collaboration with OPDs remained more at strategic level and focused on collective advocacy for the rights of children with disabilities. Through collaboration with the 10 OPDs, a social media campaign on children with disabilities' right to education was conducted on the International Day on Person with Disabilities, and small-scale research on children with disabilities' Access to Education during Crisis in Myanmar' was also conducted. Although several changes in implementation modality and partnerships were needed throughout the project timeline due to the contextual changes, SC was able to continue the good collaboration with the partners, contributing in building their capacity and technical development as well as providing support for their organizational capacity development.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

Child Protection in NORAD has three outcome measurements- Community Social Workers (CSW) competency, case management and positive parenting (addressing physical punishment and/or physical aggression in the home). Based on the changing context, the approach to program delivery was adapted to align with the prevailing circumstances. In summary, there was an enhancement in the CSW competency and case management observed. CSWs sustained a 90% achievement (F:86%; M: 100%) of child protection competencies from 2021 to 2023 with an additional 10 new competencies assessed in 2023. In parallel with CSWs directly supporting an increasing number of children (from 109 children supported by 2021, to 504 children (G: 219; B: 285) supported by end of 2023), child protection cases referred to and managed by SCI or partner's case-workers increased from 63 cases handled by 2021, to a total of 237 (G:133; B:104) handled by end 2023. However, regarding physical punishment and/or psychological aggression, there was an increase in children experiencing psychological aggression from

caregivers from 71% (G:70%; B: 72%) to 93% (G:92%; B: 93%), and significantly higher in specific areas, most likely due to the psychological impact induced by the worsening crisis. Additionally, the parental acceptance of punishment slightly rose with 3%-points, however again significantly higher in specific areas. This can be attributed to the discontinuation of partnership at the local level, again to the crisis, resulting in a reduced intensity of parental awareness related to project activities. Throughout the project, the role of Community Social Workers (CSWs) remains highly relevant in the current context. Their expertise and dedication proved invaluable during the crisis, as they played a pivotal role in ensuring the uninterrupted delivery of essential support and services to at-risk girls and boys. Through collaboration with CRG, the project actively promoted children's participation, particularly among vulnerable children who are the project's beneficiaries, ensuring their voices were heard and considered in program design and delivery. The project's implementation within the same communities as the Education sector fostered synergies between the two programs. Education and CP jointly conducted protection-related technical sessions for education volunteers, further strengthening collaboration and facilitating the identification and referral of protection-related cases to CP through established referral mechanisms.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

In terms of child rights, the programme made important strides in the pre-takeover period. Notable achievements included its stakeholders' advocacy efforts leading to inclusion of a chapter on budget allocations for child rights committees and legal prohibition of violence against children including corporal punishment in the new landmark Child Rights Law (2019), the production and submission of a supplementary CSO report for the third UPR cycle, advocacy leading to the government committing to increase public investment in social sectors benefiting children and adopting the regional plan of action for the elimination of violence against children and taking steps towards the development of a national plan of action. The programme's engagement with Myanmar National Human Rights Commission (MNHRC) led to the commission placing a greater emphasis on child rights in its strategies. Partner CSOs made steady progress in their journeys towards becoming child rights actors – advocating for children's rights in regional and district-level child rights committees, disseminating children's recommendations to local authorities, and launching the 'Vote for Children' Campaign. Children became active participants in child clubs/groups, learning their rights and exercising their civil and political rights in advocacy spaces facilitated by the programme. These early gains were stalled by the takeover, forcing the programme to rethink its approach to child rights as described above.

In the post-takeover years, the programme produced four child rights reports which included children's voices, facilitated CSOs and children to engage in regional and UN-level advocacy events, and continued capacity building and organizational development support for CSOs while navigating significant challenges due to access limitations, security concerns, displacement of children and target groups, and growing threats against rights based CSOs. Yet, there is admirable enthusiasm and resilience among children and CSOs who shared their experiences of participating in child rights initiatives and provided valuable recommendations for future improvements. The endline findings show that the new programme should place a greater focus on improving the quality of child participation (especially 'inclusive' requirement), re-strategize the existing child rights report approach to promote more participation of CSO members in all steps of the reporting process and ensure inclusion of children affected by inequality and discrimination and create opportunities for CSOs to improve their organizational capacities through OCD support and other networking platforms/spaces. Furthermore, as engagement with government service providers is suspended, the child-centered social accountability component of the program will be adapted to enable children and community members to have dialogue and advocate with secondary duty-bearers (including CSOs) for improved goods and services provided in humanitarian context.

RISK ANALYSIS

The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 was a significant challenge for programs, requiring significant adaptations due to school closures, strict regulations, and self-imposed village isolation. This disruption impacted not only timely implementation but also additional workload and stress for project staff.

The coup February 2021 affected the following program implementation:

In 2022, armed conflict in Pauk and Myaing townships posed a high-risk for project implementation in the Magwe region. Despite risk reduction measures, intensified clashes, road blockages, and the impossible transportation of program supplies led to delays in implementation and the decision to stop implementation at the end of 2022.

Armed conflict in Kayah began in late 2021, leading to preventative measures like approaching camp-based volunteers and identifying safe routes. However, implementation was halted in Bawlakhe township in September 2023 due to community fleeing, limited phone access, and roadblocks. The conflict escalated on November 11, causing the destruction of Kayah State's capital city and suspending the project from November 11 to December 2023.

Following the coup in 2021, security checkpoints

gradually increased across the country, causing staff to feel unsafe when carrying project documents. This made it hard to transport project supplies as well as carry the project documents to and from communities.

The State Administration Council enacted the Registration of Associations Law in October 2022, impacting SC's work in Myanmar. It led to changes in partnerships and delays in implementation: SCVG, a Norad project partner, ended its partnership with SC at the end of 2022.

The closure of civic spaces and restrictions on freedom of information, expression, and assembly have negatively impacted the achievement of program goals. The suspension of engagement with state duty bearers and lack of policy dialogue under the military regime have hindered progress. Program adaptation under context changes is the best option.

LESSONS LEARNED

Locally based partners successfully navigated access issues during the crisis to continue activities in target communities. Strengthening organizational and technical capacity in partner organizations is vital for programs serving marginalized and conflict-affected children.

During the crisis, community volunteers improved literacy, numeracy, and SEL skills for children. Continuous professional development and community leadership were crucial for achieving educational outcomes, requiring strengthening existing structures like village education committees.

Community-based Social Worker (CSWs) model played a critical role in the NORAD program demonstrating that the model is able to adapt and continue to support vulnerable children in a changing and challenging context in culturally appropriate ways.

NCRWG plays a key role in enhancing the technical competencies of CSOs in promoting child rights and monitoring, reporting and advocating for child rights violations through regional and international mechanisms. CRG program should work with NCRWG as strategic partner to continue Child Rights Monitoring and Reporting under the crisis and to continue the private advocacy.

The Child Rights Reporting (CRR) Common Approach was effectively utilized during the Covid-19 pandemic to monitor and demand child rights and should be applied in new projects to continue its relevance and effectiveness.

SUSTAINABILITY

The NORAD integrated program was adjusted to the Covid-19 crisis and coup on February 1, 2021. Despite facing challenges, the program's results are expected to be sustained post-project completion, as per field visit findings, endline results, and the following factors:

Community-based volunteers and village committees are crucial for project implementation, but securing funds for sustainability is a challenge. However, a grant was given for volunteer incentives and supplies in Magwe region, and 50% of Kayah state communities continue through other SC education projects with current volunteers and committees, and handing over project documents will help sustain project achievements.

NORAD implementation focused on partner capacity building; despite changes in partnerships due to conflict, partners supported by SC showed significant improvement. For example, local partner Guardian enhanced organizational and operational capacity and was able to manage multiple grants.

Significant improvements in the organization include establishing a governance structure with a Board of Directors and expanding its network by joining clusters and CSO forums. The SCVG partner effectively contributed to child rights monitoring and reporting through engagement with CSOs and training on CRR and advocacy. Four out of six CSOs developed their organizational development plan after attending the OCD workshop, with potential for implementation beyond the NORAD framework with their own leadership and donor support.

The continuity of two strategy partners (OPDs and NCRWG) in the new NORAD will contribute to the sustainability of project achievements and ensure the rights and participation of children with disabilities.

NEPAL



Suggestion box, school in Nepal.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

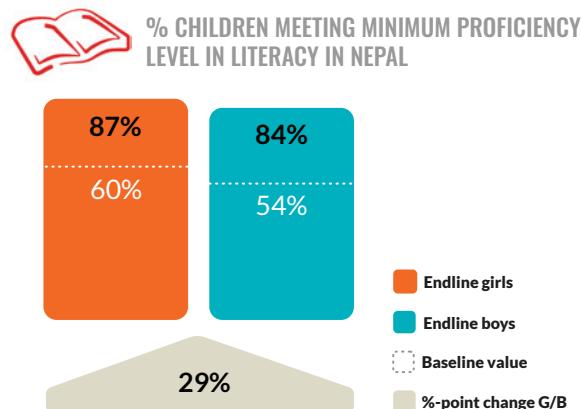
The socio-political context in Nepal remained consistent in 2023, marked by increased political stability. However, economic challenges persist, as Nepal experienced a significant economic slowdown, with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth decreasing to an estimated 1.9%. A landmark Supreme Court

ruling in June 2023 paved way for same-sex marriage, challenging existing civil code provisions. The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Intersex movement had another historical achievement on 29 November 2023 by registering a same-sex marriage, making Nepal the first country in South Asia to do so.

Natural calamities like landslides and floods are reoccurring events in the country. A 5.7 magnitude earthquake (EQ) struck Jajarkot District of Karnali Province, Nepal on 3 November 2023, killing 153 people and injuring at least 364 people. People and children in the project area (Kushe RM and Chedagad Municipality) were affected by the EQ. 1170 households were totally destroyed in Jajarkot district and 45 schools and 223 classrooms were fully damaged in the project areas. It directly affected more than 3000 children in their learning activities. The necessary resources were mobilized in collaboration with other Save the Children funded EQ response projects to develop Temporary Learning Centers (TLCs), support reading/learning materials, and Non-Food Items support.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment



The project achieved remarkable results in increasing children's access to education and improving learning outcomes, as well as strengthening the education system at local and national level. Firstly, substantial progress has been made in enrolling out-of-school children (OOSC), where all the project working palikas declared free and compulsory basic education, ensuring that all the children aged 4 to 12 enrolled in school. For learning achievements, the average score for children's pre-primary development reached 73% (G/B: 73%; CWD: 71%) an increase of 35%-points from baseline, and grade 3 children mastering minimum proficiency in reading increased with 29%-points to 86% (G: 87%; B: 84%; CWDs: 70%). The increase of 80%-points from baseline to 90% (F: 88%; M: 92%) of teachers demon-

strating professional teaching practices is seen as a major contributing factor, another is that 78% (G: 79%; B: 77%; CWDs: 69%) of the children regularly attends school, an increase from 64% at baseline. Additionally, continuation Covid-19 adaptations such as home-schooling, distribution of self-learning material and remedial classes are seen to support improved learning achievements.

The project effectively collaborated with local, provincial, and federal governments and provided technical support in the development of education policies, strategies, guidelines, and plans. The local government contributed significantly in creating safe and inclusive school environment by leveraging funds with the project. Furthermore, the MoSD of Karnali province developed procedures for strengthening public education, incorporating and scaling up several best practices from the project, including provision of pedagogical resource persons, provision of grade-appropriate learning materials, and implementation of effective classroom management. These practices are now being implemented across the Karnali province. Home-schooling is also reflected in MOEST's Recovery and Accelerated Learning (ReAL) Plan. The project successfully completed the piloting of the innovative approach School Leadership and Management (SLaM) interventions in selected schools, which were scaled up to additional schools in the project areas. An evidence review of the SLaM Pilot concludes with improved transparency, accountability and participation among school leaders, foundational skills for good leadership and management. The results from the endline assessment showed that the schools which have implemented SLaM generally have higher achievements across indicators compared to schools which did not implement SLaM. This indicates the usefulness of the SLaM interventions, and the importance of motivated and strong school leaders for achieving results for all school level interventions.

At the federal level, SC engaged and provided technical inputs during the development of the Recovery and Accelerated Learning Plan 2023-2028 (ReAL). Programme examples of the effects of home-schooling and remedial education on children's learning, became well reflected in the final ReAL document. SC also supported the MOEST/CEHRD financially and technically in dissemination of the ReAL plan in Karnali province. The project faced some challenges such as the prolonged school closures during the CoVID -19 pandemic, landslides, earthquake, and resource constraints which highlighted the need for continuous adaptation as well as targeted interventions to address systemic barriers and ensure sustained progress.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

The project achieved remarkable results with regard to child marriage and strengthening the child

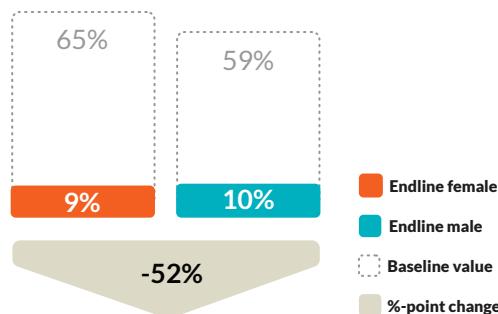
protection system at local level. Five local governments endorsed strategies to end child marriage with budgetary action plans that contribute to sustaining "No Child Marriage" wards established during the project, with a total of 28 wards (57%) declared as "No Child Marriage" wards. Each of the five local governments also endorsed the "Vice Chairperson with Adolescent Girls and Pregnant Women" program to raise awareness and support adolescent girls and pregnant women. Additionally, Kushe Rural Municipality endorsed the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) training session guideline policy and allocated NRs. 2.5 million (approx. NOK 194,696) for adolescent children. Moreover, the program resulted in a significant change in community perception with 93% of community members (F:91%; M: 95%) believing that child marriage is an unacceptable practice, an increase from 66% at baseline. This is mirrored with a notable reduction in the percentage of girls affected by early marriage and teenage pregnancy who dropped out of school, a decrease from 61 % at baseline to 14% at endline. Similarly, self-initiated early marriage dropped to 12% compared to 30% at baseline.

Local level government recruited nine Para Social Workers (PSWs) who have been supporting the most deprived children using the steps to protect common approach. Three local governments recruited one Child Welfare Officer (CWO) each as provisioned in the Child Related Act 2018. In addition to this, three local governments established toll free numbers through which children report their concerns and local level government and civil society actors follow up with support and services. Each of the five local governments established referral mechanisms. In addition, all the local governments in the project areas established child funds and allocated budgets to support children in need of special care and protection. The number of child protection cases reported, documented, and resolved have shown an increasing in trend. A total of 4,848 (G:2392 B:2456) cases were reported during the last year of the program compared to 515 (G:232 B:283) the first year. Similarly in the last year of the programme all cases (100%) were responded to, compared to 88% in 2019. The proportion of children who report feeling safe both at community level and in schools has increased with 23%-points (G: 23%p; B: 24%p; CWDs: 30%p) and 35%-points (G/B: 35%p; CWDs:42%p) respectively. This signifies the active engagement of child protection mechanisms in implementing laws against child marriage and Violence against Children (VAC) at local level.

A key challenge that hindered interventions was the Covid-19 pandemic. The stringent measures imposed by the government, along with the announced health and safety protocols halted key activities. It hampered Parenting without Violence (PWV) and Choices Voices Promises (CVP), as well



% OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS WHO BELIEVE THAT PUNISHMENT IS ACCEPTABLE IN NEPAL



as the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) sessions. In addition, it impacted regular meetings with children, parents, and CP structures. To overcome the challenges, the project developed a Radio program called "Kalila Muna", developed PSAs related to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in emergencies and disseminated through radio and miking by community facilitators. In addition, PSWs were mobilized and engaged through tele-communication and door to door visits playing a crucial role in reaching and supporting vulnerable children. Despite these challenges there was a notable reduction of 52%-points of caregivers who believe physical and humiliating punishment (PHP) is acceptable, to 10% at endline (F: 9%; M: 10%) and a decrease of 31%-points of children who had experienced physical or humiliating punishment by their caregiver, to 35% (G: 37%; B: 32%; CWDs: 64%) at endline.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

As the government system transformed into a federal structure, the project supported local, provincial and federal government in developing and endorsing 103 child-related policies, strategies, plans and procedures - 96 from local governments, 3 from provincial governments and 4 from federal government. The project supported local governments in declaring 15 wards as having Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLG) and contributed to sustain 3 wards previously declared as CFLG. Similarly, a total of 49 ward level and 5 rural/municipal level Child Rights Committees (LCRCs) were formed by the government that was provisioned in Child Related Act 2018. Moreover, 386 child clubs (CC)/networks (331 CC, 49 child club network (CCN) at ward level, 5 CCN at Municipal level and 1 CCN at province level) having a total of 6469 members (Girls:3520, Boys:2976) were formed, and have been engaging in campaigning against child marriage, violence against children and other harmful practices. The provincial government acknowledged children's participation by engaging with a provincial level child club network in their forums. Continuous advocacy with the

Karnali Province Government led to the formation of a drafting committee and initial drafts of a) Child Participation Guideline, b) Child Related Act c) Operational Guideline of Province Child Rights Committee and d) Anti-Child Marriage Strategy.

Budget advocacy by SC and partners contributed to increase budget for children of local government to 22.66% in 2023, compared to 6% in 2019. Furthermore, of the total local taxes generated by local government, 19% in 2019 was allocated for children which increased to 43% in 2023.

Engagement of CSOs played a significant role in shaping policies and facilitating their implementation. However, a more systematic involvement of CSOs in policy influencing is necessary. Further interventions need to focus on capacity-building of government officials and elected representatives, emphasizing the role and importance of CSO's engagement. In addition, advocacy efforts for budget allocation for children were more effective when local government officials' and CSO's knowledge on available resources at local and provincial levels as well as the role of various stakeholders in aligning with local level planning processes are enhanced.

SC Nepal supported CSOs and children to submit eight supplementary reports to the UN Human Rights Council (Universal Periodic Review) and the CRC Committee among which two were child-led supplementary reports. Reports to the CRC Committee covered comprehensive as well as specific child rights (gender, LGBTIQ, indigenous minorities, environment/climate change).

RISK ANALYSIS

The project was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic during early 2020 and mid-2021 and the project activities were adapted accordingly. Some of the best practices evolved during this challenging time like Home Schooling and distribution/utilization of self-learning materials, tole education, radio programs Baal Chautari - Children's platform. Natural calamities like landslides and floods were a challenge for staff safety as well as causing delays in program implementation. Similarly, the earthquake of November 2023 affected project areas, especially Jajarkot. Many lives were lost and property was damaged. Many households were totally destroyed in Jajarkot and schools and classrooms were fully damaged in the project areas. It directly affected more than 3000 children in their learning activities. Inflation and price hikes of commodities led to budgetary implication which was dealt with through collaboration and fund matching with other projects and local government.

Local, provincial, and federal level elections were conducted. For safe election, advocacy was done at local level and early preparedness plans were made such as holding of School as Zone of Peace (SZOP)

review meeting, orientation and training with palika/ward stakeholders, political leaders, teachers, community people, and child clubs. Child clubs/networks and child champions were oriented and mobilized to conduct awareness programs on 'not to engage children in political activities during election period.

LEASONS LEARNED

- The Enabling Teacher Common Approach, with its blend of expert-led sessions (20%), peer learning and sharing (30%), and self-directed learning (50%) has proven highly effective for teachers' professional development. This approach fosters a sense of accountability among teachers for their own learning and growth in their profession.
- Initiatives like Leadership Institute training (SLaM), periodic plan reviews, and learning-sharing opportunities have helped strengthen the capacity development of school leadership and management. These efforts have made school leaders proactive and accountable in their roles.
- Meaningful participation of children at local level during local level planning process played pivotal role in endorsing their issues and allocating child centric budget.
- A contingency plan and high level of readiness of the project team during pandemic or other disasters is essential to ensure smooth implementation of project interventions. The project team adapted to the changing context and challenges by using innovative approaches, like online platforms, mobile phones, and radios to deliver services and information.
- 103 policies, strategies, procedures and plans were endorsed, 93 of which at local level. However, implementation of those policies is poor because of insufficient human resources, technical capacity and budget. Further advocacy for investment in children and capacity strengthening is needed to fully implement policies.
- In the interaction meeting with adjoining local government representatives, CSOs played a role to exchange learning about campaigning against child marriage and VAC. The project was successful in reducing prevalence of child marriage and declaring wards as "No Child Marriage" wards.
- Applying a life cycle approach to gender-based violence (GBV) is essential for addressing child marriage to break the vicious cycle of GBV inherited from one generation to another. Offering counseling to children and their families and connecting them with local services, particularly

those at risk of child marriage, are crucial to preventing child marriage. The mobilization of religious leaders and traditional healers has also proven effective in contributing to preventing child marriage.

- Roll out of the "Safe Families" common approach was effective in reducing physical and humiliating punishment. The approach is, however, costly to deliver. A cost-effective modality to roll out this approach through community volunteers identified by the government is recommended.
- Strengthening local government and civil society capacity, structures and services as part of a broader child protection system is important for longer term scalability and sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY

Issue 1 - Children learn and are safe : The project best practices and results have been institutionalized by local governments, schools and provincial government, through incorporating in local policies, strategies, guidelines and procedures. The resource allocation for children from local government increased reflecting their commitment. The project also strengthened the capacity and role of CSOs and governmental structures like SMCs, ward, child clubs, local government, and provincial governments to advocate for children's right to education and to maintain the momentum beyond the project's phase out.

Issue 2: - Children are protected : All the local governments within the program have endorsed strategies to end child marriage supported by multi-sectoral costed plans of action. This contributes to sustain the declared wards as "No Child Marriage" wards and supports the goal of the Government of Nepal to end child marriage by 2030. Local level government recruited 9 PSWs for case management and three of the local governments have recruited CWO as provisioned in Child Related Act, 2018. Strengthening local government capacity is a significant step towards a strengthened sustainable protection system that addresses the needs of vulnerable children. A referral mechanism has also been put in place in each of the participating local governments with support from civil society, through which cases of violence against children are referred. In addition, the local level governments have also established child funds as per Child Related Act 2018 and allocated budgets to support the most deprived and unreach children.

Issue 3 - Children's rights are implemented: Local, province and national level government developed and endorsed 103 policies., strategies, procedures and plans. In addition, child centric budget allocated

by local level increased to 22.66% by the endline. Furthermore, WCRCs and LCRCs formed in all 49 wards and 5 project working Rural/Municipalities as per the formation and operational guidelines of the respective Rural/Municipalities are functional.. Moreover, 386 child clubs and their networks (331 CC, 49 CCN at ward level, 5 CCN at Municipal level and One CCN at Province) are functional and enlisted by the Province and Rural/Municipalities. Similarly, SC supported CSO's network - CCR Karnali, with 33 local NGOs as members working in Karnali Province is helping to monitor and implement recommendations of concluding observations by CRC and UPR at local and provincial level. Text

tion through Tax pilot gave an opportunity to share experience and best practice with SC in Nepal. SC has through the period had close contact with the Norwegian Embassy in Mexico, and staff from the embassy visited the programme in 2022. SC has through the election period in 2023 been closely in contact with the Semilla party, and the current Vice President visited SC and children participating in the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme during the election campaign.

COLOMBIA



Girls participating in project activities in Colombia.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

LATIN AMERICA

Assessment of Country Engagement Plans

Latin America has throughout the Norad implementation period seen one of the largest movements of people in modern history. The Venezuela crisis has led to millions of Venezuelans leaving their country in search of a better opportunity, putting pressure to the health and education system in neighbouring countries. SCN was essential in SCs presence in Venezuela, and to share knowledge from the work SC is doing in Colombia. The CEP for Colombia became more humanitarian throughout the period, and SCN supported SC Colombia in strengthening their humanitarian capacity and to increase the humanitarian portfolio, including being grantee for Education Cannot Wait. SC Sweden secured funding from SIDA Hum for a humanitarian response in Catatumbo, the area where the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme was implemented. The Norwegian and Swedish Embassy travelled together to the area to see both projects and the integration of these. SCN and SC Colombia work closely on advocacy towards Norwegian and Colombia governments, and one of the success stories of the advocacy work is the Colombian signing of the Safe Schools Declaration in 2022.

The regional SIDA civil society programme has a similar focus on strengthening civil society, and both SCS and SCN worked with the same partner in Guatemala. The majority of the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme has been implemented in the same area as large SC US programme, giving SC the chance to use information and statistics from the US supported programme in the advocacy work of the Norad-funded programme. The planned engagement with SC Guatemala on the Domestic Resource Mobiliza-

Context update

The Colombian government continued peace dialogues with armed groups such as the ELN, EPL, dissidents of the FARC, and Estado Mayor Central (EMC), amongst others, as part of its 'Total Peace' policy. However, some armed groups have not complied with a ceasefire, leading to ongoing violence in several regions of the country, with continued attacks on educational institutions. According to official data from the Colombian Victim's Unit, 56% of the population fallen victim to confrontations between different factions. The attacks on schools have manifested in threats to members of the school community, unsafe travel for children and staff, and frequent school closures. The situation is especially dire in the regions of Antioquia, Cauca, Norte de Santander, and Valle del Cauca. The local elections in 2023 have only exacerbated these conflicts. In La Playa, for instance, local authorities had to leave the municipality for fear of being attacked.

Catatumbo, the region of implementation, has been severely impacted by armed conflict. Civilians have endured various forms of violence, including kidnapping, displacement, and confinement, which have frequently led to the suspension of classes. In addition, the strong military presence and limited access to basic services have negatively affected the well-being of those living in these communities.

Within the region, armed groups maintain a “parallel governance system”, enforcing their own rules upon the local communities.

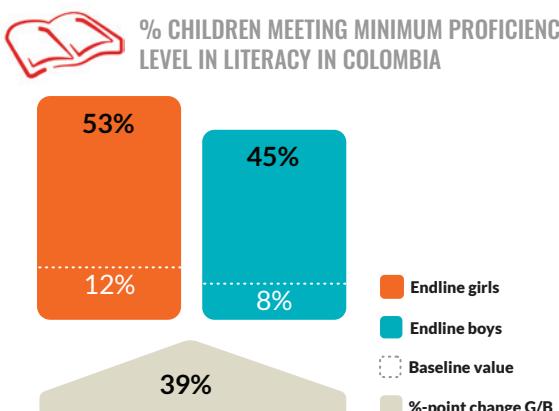
Additionally, the Catatumbo region suffered from the effects of climate change, including droughts, floods and avalanches, which have resulted in road blockages, displacement of families, and the suspension of classes as schools are often repurposed into emergency shelters.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

The project made significant progress implementing School Improvement Plans (SIPs), based on risks in and around schools. As we moved from 1 school at baseline up to 8 schools at the endline, out of 14. Notably, the SIPs facilitated collaboration and training to the school governance committees on issues such as gender equality, inclusion, and child protection. However, one area we believe still needs improvement is child participation in monitoring the work of the SIPs. In addition, existing problems such as sexual and gender violence are so normalized that they are not even seen as problematic issues.

One of the most significant impacts of the project was the improvements in the foundational literacy, numeracy and SEL skills of children, despite challenges due to Covid-19. At the BL only 10% of 262 children assessed were able to demonstrate expected foundational skills, however this figure went up to 49% (G:53% / B: 45%) of 234 children assessed at the endline. A success related to updating of the curriculums, adding teachers' practical strategies to use in the classroom (using Literacy and Numeracy Boost Common Approach), equipping schools with quality learning materials, and supporting caregivers with play-based literacy and numeracy strategies.



There was a substantial improvement in the professional teaching practices going from 68% at the baseline to 100% at endline (which had a smaller

sample than baseline), that we can also attribute to the practical strategies and learning materials.

Covid-19 presented diverse challenges to the education component. The program was not designed for remote learning, so we had to make significant adjustments. An important lesson was to always prepare education continuity plans to mitigate the effects of external shocks. Although the immediate reaction in the education sector was to switch to online learning, this is usually not possible in this context, where children lack access to internet, infrastructure is deficient and there is lack of equipment. Despite many challenges, Covid-19 also facilitated improvements, such as training teachers on digital skills, leaving them better prepared for any similar situation.

Although SCColombia did not implement “Issue 2” in its full complexity, the programme did address child protection issues, mainly from a safe-schools common approach perspective. The main achievements to mention under this area of work are: The project’s contribution to the Secretariat of Education to re-opening schools after Covid-19, by developing a joint guidance which was circulated across all schools in the Catatumbo region. Additionally, the development of Comprehensive school safety planning and coexistence manuals, which adopt an all-hazard and all-inclusive approach, were implemented only in 3 schools at baseline. At the endline we managed to implement in all 15 schools of the programme. In order to mitigate Child Protection risks and safeguarding concerns the existing Code of Conduct/Co-Existence manuals were also updated to ensure that the measures put into place do not violate the right to education and are replaced with positive discipline measures like helping the school.

Challenges and deviations: An important challenge has been the integration of education continuity plans into risk management strategies. Given that school disruptions are frequent due to the security situation in the region, having a plan in place to ensure the continuity of education is crucial. This would proactively address issues related to potential school closures, minimizing the impact on students' learning experiences.

While we have seen improvements at the end line, the extend of children's participation in different spaces and activities is still limited. In most cases, their participation is seen merely as a form of “validation”, rather than “co-creation.”

We continue to observe persistent gender biases that require additional efforts. For example, at the end line, only about half of the students (51%) reported that they do not subscribe to the notion that girls are worse than boys in mathematics. Similarly, only half (51%) disagreed with the assertion that women should dress in a certain way to prevent assault. These findings highlight enduring attitudes and beliefs that hinder girls from realizing their full potential.

Schools do not always address the safety issues that children prioritize. For example, for schools the concept of safety is mainly about the physical environment, while local authorities, tend to focus on teacher practices within the classroom. However, students are more concerned with issues about sexual and reproductive health rights, gender, and sexual orientation. Particularly in traditional religious communities where traditional gender roles prevail.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

Significant progress has been made by influencing various public policies, including the ban on physical punishment; the signing of the Safe Schools Declaration; and the ratification of the Holistic Development Law. These are instrumental in the long-term impact of the program outcomes and play a pivotal role in the protection of children's rights.

The programme established Children Roundtables, a mechanism for children and adolescents to promote dialogue, initiatives, and advocacy before the authorities. A total of 42 children (62% girls) trained in the National Participation Network supported by SC. Additionally, 72 children (60% girls) have participated in school governance systems in the municipalities of La Playa, Hacarí, Ocaña, and Cúcuta and 78 children (59% girls) joined in participation and communication strategy trainings.

To help ensure the fulfilment of children's rights, we supported children in monitoring the commitments of local authorities and bolstering their participation in local forums, such as the Participation Committees. At the National level, we have supported children's contribution to the National Development Plan, the country's most important policy document.

We have forged strategic partnerships to advocate for children's rights and amplify our impact and participated in different platforms, including Niñez Ya, Alianza por la Niñez Colombiana, and the Forum of International Organizations, and have maintained a strong alliance with the Alliance for Colombian Children (Coalico)

Thanks to the work done with Coalico we will be able to present, for the first time, an alternative report made by children for the Committee on the Rights of the Child. This innovative report, styled as a newscast and titled "Impact: The Voice of Children," was officially unveiled in Bogotá on November 20th, 2023. We expect to present it to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2024.

Challenges and deviations: Despite these achievements, we have encountered several challenges that limited the ability to engage more children in policymaking. Local authorities have limited capacity to meet children needs and fulfil their rights and high turnover of staff often leads to setbacks in the progress attained.

RISK ANALYSIS

Armed conflict and extreme climate events have been some of the main risks during the five years implementation.

We have experienced first-hand the severe impact of armed conflict in the communities, since all our staff are part of these communities. The conflict escalated notably during the local elections in 2023, particularly in the areas of Teorama, El Carmen, Convención, and Otaré. During this period, clashes between different armed groups and national security forces intensified, leaving local populations caught in the middle. As a result, some sessions had to be conducted online.

Extreme climate events also posed significant challenges. For instance, the main road in the municipality of Abrego collapsed in late April 2023 due to severe weather conditions. This forced our team to take lengthy detours -driving to Bucaramanga and flying to Cúcuta- to continue with the activities, affecting programme implementation and increasing costs throughout the year.

LESSONS LEARNED

Tailored response and flexibility: While certain characteristics within the region remain constant, recognizing each school and community as unique is crucial for crafting more tailored responses for diverse groups. Despite operating under a single work plan, the programme took into account the varying needs of individual schools during implementation. It is essential for future projects to also adopt a flexible approach to effectively cater to these unique contexts. The project's adaptability and flexibility to changing conditions are essential for operational success. The conflict, climatic events, and the pandemic showed the importance of making agile decisions by quickly adapting to the new context.

Monitoring by children: Children participated and engaged in the design phase of the school improvement plans. On the other hand, one of the main challenges encountered was the involvement of children in monitoring the school improvement plans, where children's engagement was limited. Another important program lessons learned is activity adjustments. Considering the conflict context. It has been crucial to include social-emotional learning (SEL), life skills development and foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, and based on needs in the school communities, to strengthen the efforts in these activities. We believe SEL skills strengthen children's resilience and positively affect their academic performance.

Partnerships: Collaboration with community leaders and civil society organizations is vital for community-level impact and sustainability. It would have been impossible to achieve the results without local

partners' and community members' ongoing support and commitment. For future projects, it would be desirable to further engage with Community Action boards, due to their knowledge of their regions and legitimacy. Strengthening civil society organizations is vital for addressing children's needs in territories lacking a robust institutional presence.

Building trust with the communities is crucial, especially in areas affected by conflict. These communities tend to have limited access, often viewing outsiders with suspicion. One of the strategies employed by SC is to recruit residents as part of the team. This approach not only facilitates access to the communities but also enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges they encounter, allowing us to tailor our responses more effectively.

Mental health: Urgent attention is needed for mental health and protection issues, such as sexual violence, which need improved coordination among local service providers. Despite these challenges, the project fostered strong partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), mitigating risks and identifying opportunities for sustainability.

Disability Inclusion: Addressing the diverse needs of children with disabilities (physical and non-physical) requires case-based interventions and financial/technical and human resources to ensure effective inclusion and mitigate discrimination. While assistive devices and rehabilitation are crucial, they must be complemented by adequate human resources. Thus, our programme provided learning materials, as well as capacity training. But it is important to plan further resources to cover all levels: child, school, and family. Economic and attitudinal beliefs, often from families, continue to be one of the main barriers for full inclusion and gender equality.

SUSTAINABILITY

The 'Catatumbo ama la educación' project worked at the socio-ecological level, targeting structure and systematic level issues to foster sustainable and long-lasting changes. Such is the case of our advocacy work, that focused on policy and legislative changes that will protect and help fulfil children's rights in the upcoming years. Such as the Ban on physical punishment, the Safe Schools Declaration, the Holistic Development Law, and the active participation on the National Development Plan consultations.

Throughout the implementation, we emphasized capacity strengthening of our partners and stakeholders and co-implementation with children and communities as core strategies for sustainability. To this end, the project team worked alongside CSOs, schools, and local authorities, transferring knowledge and cross-sharing experiences.

As part of the project closeout, a sustainability

plan was developed for each thematic area to ensure that gains made are not lost. This included refreshers on key programmatic activities and the transfer of tools for the use to the wider educational community. This sustainability plan included various actions, such as establishing school networks and transferring knowledge and tools to community members. However, with the change of local administrations, there was a great risk of losing the gains made. To prevent this, the project team organized handover meetings with the new administration, informing them about our work during the last 5 years, giving visibility to the project and trying to ensure the sustainability of our work.

GUATEMALA



Girls playing basketball at school in Quiche, Guatemala.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

Context update

Guatemala maintains serious economic and social disparities. The number of people in need of protection is expected to reach three million in 2024, largely due increased human mobility and the humanitarian fallout from organized crime. The country ranks first in Latin America in child (under 5 years old) malnutrition, with Quiche and Chiquimula, the regions of implementation, being particularly vulnerable.

During most of 2023, the post-presidential election attempts to diminish the "Movimiento Semilla" party's influence, sparked instability, blockades and demonstrations calling for the resignation of officials accused of corruption. After several months of legal struggles and social instability, Bernardo Arevalo was finally sworn as President of Guatemala in January 2024. The social unrest prompted Save the Children to postpone field visits for safety reasons, opting for remote support to partners.

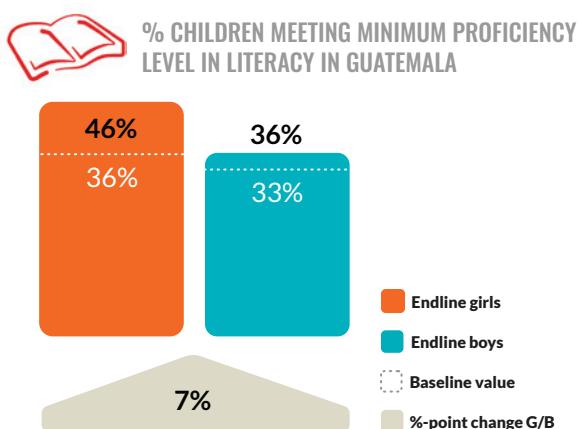
Covid-19 remains a concern, although the Government and the population have relaxed preventive

measures. The Ministry of Education's "Aprendo en Casa" initiative has facilitated remote learning across media platforms. The 2023 school year marked a return to in-person education after three years of hybrid education. SC has resumed field visits, when not affected by the social unrest, while enhancing staff protection that ensured the implementation of the programme.

Summary of key achievements and challenges

Issue 1: Children Learn and are safe in a quality learning environment

Despite the challenging conditions affecting the education sector in Guatemala, the programme managed to make a positive contribution in students' performance level in the reading test, leading to an increase from 34% (G:36%; B: 33%) to 41% (G: 46%; B: 36%), showing a 7%-points improvement in results. The programme implemented a multi-phased approach supporting the roll out of the bi-lingual curriculum with the development of additional teaching and learning materials, together with teachers, parents and children; in addition to further enhancing community participation in education, awareness creation and sharing student performance data on an annual basis to analyse results and engaging with parents, teachers, and leaders.



Positive results were also achieved for disability inclusion, with 99 students with disabilities (G:36/ B:63) were enrolled in the education system at EL, a significant increase from the BL with only 23 students with disabilities enrolled (G:13/B:10). This is a direct result from the coordination with partners and the Directorate General of Special Education.

To foster safe learning environments, the programme carried out trainings for 958 parents (839 women) on family empowerment and participation of mothers, fathers, and caregivers to positively impact their children's learning process, through dialogue, trust, and balanced parenting.

Security and protection strategies and advocacy were strengthened in educational communities, fostering safe learning environments to mitigate violence, threats and risks caused by natural or man-made phenomena, while promoting child participation in school governance and contributing to the School Risk Management Plans.

Challenges and deviations:

Some adjustments involved awareness campaigns in Ixil and Ch'orti languages to promote enrolment using the radio to reach all communities. The traditional education method was adapted to an inverted educational model (centered on the student as main driver of the learning topics from home and the teacher as a facilitator). As part of Safe Back to School after the pandemic, SC promoted safety and protection protocols among schools, staff, and partners and distributed hygiene kits.

In Guatemala, Bilingual Intercultural Education was strengthened by implementing coordinated actions with partners and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). Learning materials in native languages were developed and endorsed by educational authorities based on SC's Literacy Boost common approach. This is an example of how SC and partner work has uptake in the Ministry - however, implementation remains slow due to lack of funding for education at a national level.

Issue 2: Children are protected from violence and abuse

SC in Guatemala worked on strengthening the capacities of community child protection systems, schools, communities, local partners and government entities, to better identify and respond to situations of violence, neglect and abuse of children. These efforts can be seen in results such as the establishment of Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms (CBCPM). 150 members of the CBCPMs (F: 65%/M: 35%) were trained on children's rights and child protection concerns, disability inclusion, and socio-emotional support, and in 2023 half of the 22 newly established CBCPMs were assessed to actively identifying, registering and referring child protection cases. Further, referral pathways to prevent the re-victimization of vulnerable children were established.

Additionally, in collaboration with the Municipal Office for Children and Adolescents in both Jocotán and Nebaj, SC identified and referred 14 child violence cases, including 4 involving children with disabilities. A referral protocol was established, streamlining service delivery, reducing waiting times, and preventing re-victimization.

658 parents and caregivers (564 women) were educated on non-violent parenting and children's rights, with 99% acknowledging that violence in daily parenting is not acceptable.

311 children (202 girls) were engaged to promote

their participation and strengthen their understanding on children's rights through the "The Magic of the Children and Adolescents' Comprehensive Prevention Act" methodology.

Challenges and deviations:

There are multiple limitations in public services that affect the level of protection that children should have. The constant turnover of personnel in overseeing institutions, coupled with poor inter-agency coordination for cases referral, and centralized urban protection services, leads to delayed and ineffective responses in remote communities. The municipal protection system requires coordinated efforts by the referral network to provide effective, efficient, and prompt services.

There is a significant gender imbalance based on culturally accepted practices and traditional gender roles and men's limited interest in changing norms and power dynamics, and the need for joint decision-making between fathers and mothers to foster trust among all family members, prevent conflict, and ensure equal opportunities for education and personal growth for girls and boys.

Issue 3: Children's rights are implemented

The information generated by the Child Rights and Public Investment observatory supported by SC served as basis for the advocacy efforts and led to a 55% increase in the national budget for children from 2018 to 2023. The data and information have also been published in different media and used as a base for studies and discussion forums,

Children contributed to four Supplementary Reports regarding their situation and were submitted to the UN mechanisms: A child-informed report and child-led input report prior to the reporting in 2023; a report submitted to the Child Rights Committee; and a report, in collaboration with other CSOs, submitted to the Human Rights Council before Guatemala's review in the Universal Periodic Review, with a specific section on children's rights.

Three organizations focused on childhood and adolescence participation were formed,³³ enhancing children's knowledge and skills in rights, leadership, and advocacy, leading to active civic participation and interaction with rights guarantors.

During 2023, SC Guatemala and Lebanon, conducted an evaluation of children's participation within *Leaving No Child Behind* programme and activities. Children assessed their participation through consultations, workshops, and interviews, reflecting on their actions' impact and proposing ways to expand their role in realizing their rights. The evaluation showed that through participation

children and adolescents improved their self-esteem and strengthened their leadership, management, and advocacy skills. Additionally, it provided them with opportunities to a) meet and socialize with new people, b) share experiences and learn from them, c) acquire new knowledge, and d) develop values of solidarity, responsibility, and mutual support. One key lesson is that participation of children in all phases of the project is essential for ensuring that actions align with their own expectations.

One of the main learnings of the project is that advocacy actions with guarantors yield better results when conducted in a coordinated and complementary manner with other civil society organizations with similar objectives.

Challenges and deviations:

Children remain underrepresented in public programs and budgets, with inadequate public investment for their rights, limited civic engagement opportunities due to adult-centric spaces, and protracted legislative processes for their welfare.

The resolutions and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and the UN Human Rights Council are not binding on the State of Guatemala; thus, compliance depends on the political will of the guarantor institutions.

New executive, legislative, and municipal authorities took office in January 2024, which means that the new technical teams of guarantor institutions need to be sensitized to prioritize and continue with the commitments made with the participation of children during 2023.

Flexibility on budget adjustments allowed additional funds to enable some partners to implement activities beyond those initially planned, i.e., ICEFI conducted specific studies on children's welfare, and SC directly supported health services in the Chortí area to mitigate the effects of Covid-19.

RISK ANALYSIS

Guatemala is highly vulnerable to climate change, natural phenomena, biological threats (Covid-19), and endemic conditions like dengue. These factors directly impact the economy and families' physical, psychological, and emotional health. The tropical storms Eta, Iota, and Pilar, among others, affected the areas of intervention, which caused river overflows and landslides, affecting local food production and food insecurity, hindering children's education, disrupting communication routes, and impacting family economies.

A hybrid modality (virtual and in-person) was implemented, and geographic areas were prioritized

33) Red de Triunfadores en Acción – Ixil, Nebaj; Organización Juvenil Escobillal y Organización Juvenil la Cuestona, both from Jocotán, Chortí.

to apply the emergency curriculum the Ministry of Education proposed. Additionally, the lack of access to tools and technological services in the Educational Community and the limited training of teachers in using digital platforms adversely affected the quality of education.

The project identified the opportunity to work assertively and comprehensively with partner organizations, school authorities, guarantor institutions, parents, and caregivers to promote mitigation actions to address these risks.

LEASONS LEARNED

The collaborative work with local partner organizations enabled the implementation of context-specific and mediated processes in response to the needs of the beneficiary population. An approach grounded in the context facilitated the project's successful implementation based on the beneficiaries' shared interests in an environment of equality, respect, tolerance, inclusion, and community participation.

The ownership of the project's interventions by civil society will ensure the sustainability of the actions and will require the participation of its representatives throughout the entire project cycle. This participation significantly consolidates the positioning of local partners and community recognition.

It is essential to maintain constant, ongoing, and assertive communication for each project component with partner organizations and with consistent support from the financial area. It is necessary to implement other forms of internal controls, such as cross-referencing, to confirm the accuracy of the information.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project fostered strategic alliances between partner organizations and guarantor institutions such as municipal governments, Public Prosecutor's Offices (MP), and the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) to ensure the sustainability of future project actions. These actions will be based on fulfilling children's rights and gender equality, focusing on education and children's protection.

The active participation and leading role of communities were crucial for sustainability. For example, the management of information and the updating of mechanisms and guidelines on the prevention and reporting of cases of violence against children by community leaders were fundamental for the continuous exercise of their rights. The involvement of children and adults facilitated community empowerment and the approval of actions. Children, adolescents, women, and men clearly expressed situations that affect them daily. They actively participated in the different spaces corresponding to their context, ensuring equal opportunities.

It was necessary to systematize the administra-

tive, financial, and programmatic strengthening of partner organizations comprehensively across the components that make up the program to ensure sustainability.

4. SUSTAINABILITY

The Norad 2019-2023 Leave No One Behind programme was designed to ensure that the results last beyond the programme implementation period and create long term changes for children. The main strategies have been working with and through civil society partners, strengthening systems (especially education and child protection structures), building government capacity, supporting civil society to hold the government to account, and empowering children and communities. Below, we outline promising examples of all these different strategies.

At the end of the project period in Colombia, all 14 partner organizations had achieved at least 13 out of the 15 agreed-upon capacity strengthening milestones. For example, the Caritas Felices Foundation, which focuses on the right to education and to play, improved their fiscal management and resource mobilisation capacity. This enabled them to fundraise from additional donors to organise local and national children's sports events to promote child rights. The Caritas Felices is one of many partner organisations that will continue to deliver child rights services and advocacy after this project. In Nepal, SCI and partners successfully advocated for the establishment of governance and structures allocation of financial resources to the education and protection systems at the local level. This has contributed to dedicated human resources, including Child Welfare Officers as outlined in "The Children Act 2018", pedagogical resource persons as outlined in "The Procedure for Public Education Improvement in Karnali Province", facilitators for home schooling, and an increase in case workers. These systems are embedded in the local government structures and will not depend on continued support from SCI. Together with Disabled People's Organisations in Niger, SCI brought together the six ministries responsible for education, civil society organisations and a consortium of INGOs to train state officials on disability inclusion and present prioritised suggestions for policies and initiatives. Among the tangible outcomes were the government-owned and UNICEF-funded

"Programme pilote de filet social inclusif des personnes handicapées". While challenged by the recent upheavals in Niger, such plans do commit the government to independent action. In Mozambique, SCI has established and strengthened two child rights advocacy platforms - the 3R Platform for the three main national child rights networks and PLASOC: a Manica-based provincial platform. These partners can now use the gained capacity and experience to advocate and hold the State to account on their own without SCI, soliciting their own funding from institutional donors – and have led the process of civil society supplementary reporting to international human rights mechanism. Both the existence of the advocacy platforms and the outcomes of the State review processes will affect changes for children without further SCI support. Finally in Somalia, the child-led clubs' advocacy and campaign work have not only brought about changes for children at the school and community levels – SCI's qualitative study on children's own perception showed that after their participation in the child-led clubs, they felt more knowledgeable about their rights and better able to advocate for them. This points to the importance of strengthening children's leadership and abilities, for the future and for the present.

5. RESULTS AND EVALUATIONS

Lessons Learned from results monitoring and evaluations

After a simplified and adapted midterm data-collection in 2021 due to Covid-19, endline data collection was conducted in 11 of 12 countries, with oPt not able to collect data due to the ongoing situation. A total of 10 of the countries were able to collect comparable data with baseline, enabling the documentation of progress over the last five years. An exception to this was Myanmar, where the changes in the security-situation since 2020 led to alternate implementation modality and data-collection approach in 2021, hence their data is only comparable from 2021 to 2023.

As such, documentation of total programme at endline is significantly more robust and complete in 2023 compared at midterm in 2021. While there are variations in results achieved in the diverse country programmes, the *Leaving No Child Behind* programme overall met set targets on 15 of 17 quantitative indicators.

In the majority of countries outcome monitoring, baseline, midline and endline have been conducted with in-house capacity, by SC and partner staff. A few exceptions have been where country offices have been short-staffed or lacking resources. While a large undertaking for the country offices, the organisations and partners understanding of the content of the monitoring and ability to act upon the results were noticeably higher compared to cases where external evaluators were used. Based on this, SCN aims to continue recommending in-house capacity for baseline, midline and endline data collection in the future. At the same time SCN acknowledges that this is challenging for some country

programmes and, where not feasible, external support can supplement in-house capacity, facilitating better analysis and uptake of results.

Most of the data has been collected through digital platforms, primarily KoBo Collect, and hence lifted the accuracy of data collected. Effort has been done to also digitalise the analysis; however, while successful in some cases, challenges have also emerged. One example is the calculation platform set up for the functional risk-informed school improvement plans (FRI SIP – outcome 1.3). While the tool itself was widely used and many country offices expressed interest in applying it as a monitoring tool, there were numerous technical challenges with the online reporting platform. After iterative explorations of the calculation platform and data sets themselves, our teams have identified several key learnings moving forward:

- Technology and maintenance – Digital systems need to be well-resourced and supported by a continuously to ensure compatibility and maintenance.
- Routines and training– Robust support and training is required to ensure that data-structures are kept intact as data is extracted and moved between formats and databases.
- Validation – Data must be continuously validated to ensure analytical tools can function automatically and provide consistent, reliable results.
- In-house vs out-sourced technology support – Outsourcing support has led to challenges in bug-fixing and maintenance. Ensuring responsive support or using tools with a proven track record of flexibility and reliability is essential.

Future efforts in the digitalisation work will require close collaboration with SCI, who is implementing a suite of new tools and training. SCN's position within the movement and through the Norad Framework agreement puts us in a position to take the lead in many areas – such as developing new tools and standards.

Qualitative data:

The framework included seven qualitative indicators to enable country programmes better document results which are not easily quantifiable. At the end of the programme nine COs have developed 16 case-studies within the fields of education, child protection and child rights governance. In addition, country offices have had their own learning agenda, and more than 30 studies have been conducted at country office level.

While qualitative information is high in demand, many country offices found it challenging to collect and analyse qualitative data. Where resources have been scarce, quantitative data was often prioritized, and some country offices struggled to develop their planned case-studies. Based on this experience, future frameworks will include support for collaboration with country offices to identify qualitative indicators based on emergent findings in country programmes. Additionally, we aim to support targeted capacity building towards these identified opportunities.

Save the Children's learning agenda

During the framework a total of 15 studies and evaluations over various scales have been led or commissioned by SCN. Despite Covid-19 largely hampering the initially planned studies and progress, SCN was able to re-allocate resources to meet new identified areas. Now, at the end of programme we have conducted four studies under education, one under child protection, three under child rights governance and five under cross-cutting (partnership 2; children with disabilities 2; gender 1). In addition, in-country evaluations were done in the four phase-out countries Cambodia, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia in 2020/ 21 on which a synthesis report was completed, and an external follow-up examination of post-implementation sustainability was carried out in 2023.

End of Program Learnings

The evaluations of SCN's programs across several countries provide insight into the successes and challenges in advancing gender equality, educational technology, child rights, and program sustainability. These evaluations collectively stress the importance of context-specific strategies, robust capacity building, program integration with local systems, and engaging children and communities to improve program efficacy and sustainability.

SCN's gender initiatives have made notable progress yet face challenges like inconsistent use of methodologies and varying levels of gender expertise across offices. Recommendations include bolstering gender-focused programming and establishing gender-focal points for all programs. The learning labs in Somalia have positively impacted literacy and numeracy but require better alignment with the national curriculum. In Mozambique and South Sudan, efforts to curb child marriage and enshrine child rights into law have been significant, though issues like low prosecution rates and reaching out-of-school children persist. The Inclusive Education program seeks to serve children with disabilities better but issues a call for more tailored approaches. The SLaM Pilot in Nepal demonstrates improved educational leadership, advocating for a principle-based and community-engaged approach. The sustainability re-assessment underscores the need for adaptable program designs and enhanced monitoring to maintain long-term impact. In Lebanon and Guatemala, youth participation in decision-making is emphasized, with SCN committed to integrating their feedback into program development. The CCSA program's involvement of children and communities in social accountability highlights a need for more comprehensive training. Lastly, the CFM-TV pilot in Somalia offers a promising tool for identifying children with disabilities, suggesting a need for focused teacher training to ensure effective implementation.

As we examine each program in detail, we recognize recurring themes: the necessity for tailored solutions, the critical role of building skills and knowledge, the need to weave programs into local systems better, and the importance of involving children in decisions that affect their lives. These evaluations offer a roadmap for understanding SCN's impact and inform future strategies, which have turned into program-level response plans, thus setting the stage for participatory learning and improved programming.

List of evaluations carried out through the entire implementation period

1. School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Project in Nepal – using a Developmental Evaluation Approach, InformEd, December 2021
2. The Keystone Partnership Survey 2021, Keystone, March 2022
3. Save the Children's Programme to end Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancies in Malawi, Joar Svanemyr and Vibeke Wang, Chr. Michelsen Institute, March 2022
4. Save the Children Norway Localisation Baseline 2021, Patrick Crump and Zakir Hussain, 30. September 2022.
5. Assessing Stakeholders' Perception of Technology in Learning Labs Schools for the Norad Programme in Puntland, Somalia, 2022.
6. Quality of disability data and disability inclusion in countries included in the Norad Framework Agreement 2019-2023, Save the Children Norway, August 2022.
7. Save the Children Sustainability Principles: A synthesis report of sustainability of the Norad Funded Programs in four Phase-out Countries, Save the Children Norway, December 2022
8. Review of Save the Children's Gender Leaving No Child Behind, Stephen Van Houten and Sarah Pugh, 20. February 2023.
9. *Leaving No Child Behind – A Study of Inclusive Education with a Focus on Disability Inclusion.* Stone Soup, Oslo, 2023.
10. School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Evidence Review. Save the Children Norway, Oslo. 2024.
11. Phase-out Country Sustainability Re-assessment. Oslo Economics. 2024.
12. Evaluation of the perception of children and adolescents regarding their participation in the SC-Norad-funded Project in Guatemala. Save the Children Norway, Oslo. 2024.
13. Generation of Participation and Hope in Lebanon. Save the Children Norway, Oslo. 2024
14. Exploratory Learning Study on Child-Centered Social Accountability (CCSA) in Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Save the Children Norway, Oslo. 2024.
15. Reliability and Feasibility of the Child Functioning Module – Teacher Version: Findings from a Pilot Test Conducted in Somalia. Save the Children Norway, Oslo. 2024.

ANNEXES

1. Updated results framework with end line data AND
Norad mandatory education indicators. (Ref. Document attached)
2. Endine methodology
3. Summary of evaluations completed in 2023-2024
4. Financial and Auditors Report (Ref. Document attached)
5. Risk matrix (Ref. Document attached)

ANNEX 1.a: Updated Results Framework with Endline Data

Norad -End Of Programme Report - Leaving No Child Behind 2019-2023

Reader guide:

- The framework reports baseline and endline achievement. Midterm achievements are omitted due to lack of comparability (these were reported in Annex 3 in “Leaving No Child Behind – progress Report 2019 -2021, QZA – 1810373” *Redd Barna 2022.*)
- Where needed, baselines have been updated in 2023 to facilitate for comparability with endline reporting countries.
- Original and revised endline targets are included as reported at MTR.
- Updates in calculations and reporting countries are included in footnotes.

Outcome indicators: Children learn and are safe

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| 1.1 | 1.1.1 # of Countries showing a progression in literacy (by country) | County Office details (BL) shared | Endline achievement: 6 of 10 countries with 5%-points increase | Mid-term target: All countries showing a minimum of 3%-point increase from baseline End-line target: | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Project/national assessments for example EGRA, UWEZO, ASER | At country level the indicator will be % (& #) of children meeting expected proficiency level in grade X in literacy | Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Palestine, |

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|--|---|---|---|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| | | at MTR ¹ , EL reflected in narrative report. Detailed overview available upon request. | | All countries showing a minimum 5% point increase from baseline Revised EL target: 8 out of 12 countries showing a minimum 5%-points increase from baseline. | | | (by sex and disability) (Norad 2.1) | Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda |
| 1.2 | 1.2.1 % (& #) of children currently attending school who have been physically punished by a teacher during the last 12 months (by sex and disability) | Baseline values: 50% (2543 children) (g: 47%; b: 52%) CWDs: 56% (g:49%; b: 62%) ² Updated baseline values: Total: 59% (G:48%; B: 52%) ³ | Endline Achievement: 29% (G:27%; B: 31%) | Mid-term target: Total: 37% (g: 36%; b:39%; CWDs 47% (CWD g: 44%; b:50%) End-line target: Total: 25% (g: 25%; b: 25%) CWDs: 25% (g. 25%; b: 25%) Revised end-line target: | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Survey/child self-reporting | | Guatemala, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Myanmar |

¹ 2019 pending baselines from Niger, Somalia and Nepal are updated.

² Reporting COs on CWDs at baseline: Lebanon, Palestine, Myanmar, Guatemala.

³ MMR and OPT is excluded in calculation, to ensure universe (countries) in BL and EL to be the same. Pending baseline values for Niger and Somalia included

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|--|---|--|--|--|-----------------------------|---|---|
| | | | | <p>Total: 35% (g: 35%; b: 35%)</p> <p>CWDs: 35% (g: 35%; b: 35%).</p> | | | | |
| 1.2 | 1.2.2 # of Countries showing a progression in % (& #) of children reporting feeling well/and or safe within the school (by country) | County Office details (BL) shared at MTR, EL reflected in narrative report. Detailed overview available upon request. | Endline achievement: 6 of 8 reporting countries with 20%-point increase | <p>Mid-term target: 9 of 12 countries 7 out of 10 countries⁴ with 10%- point increase from baseline</p> <p>End-line target: 6 out of 10 countries with 20% point increase from baseline⁵</p> <p>Revised EL target: 5 out of 10 countries with 20% point</p> | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Survey/child self-reporting | <p>At country level the indicator will be % (& #) of children who report feeling well/ and or safe within the school (by sex and disability)⁷</p> <p>Country contextualized forms will be developed hence indicator cannot be aggregated</p> | Colombia, Guatemala, Malawi, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda |

⁴ There was a typo in the LF submitted at BL. Total reporting countries is only 10, therefore mid-term and end-line targets are now corrected.

⁵ ~~Due to high baseline values, three countries do not expect a 10% points increase for midterm, and four countries do not expect a 20% points increase for end line. See annex 2 for country level details.~~

⁷ Countries disaggregating on CWDs at baseline: Palestine, Myanmar, Nepal, Guatemala.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | | increase from baseline ⁶ | | | | |
| | 1.2.3 Qualitative study: How can child participation contribute to safer learning environments | | | | | | | |
| 1.3 | 1.3.1 # of countries showing a progression in % of teachers who demonstrate professional teaching practices, by sex | County Office details (BL) shared at MTR, EL reflected in narrative report. Detailed overview available upon request. | Endline achievement: 7 of 10 reporting countries with 25%-point increase | Mid-term target: 9 of 12 countries with 10%-point increase from baseline End line target: 8 of 12 countries with 25% point increase from baseline ⁸ Revised EL target: 7 of 12 countries with 25%-points increase from baseline | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Monitoring data; Classroom observation, teacher self-assessments | At country level the indicator will be % (#) of teachers who demonstrate professional teaching practices, by sex. COs will define thresholds of professional teaching practices based on interventions and context hence | Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda |

⁶ Due to high baseline or midterm value, five countries do not expect a 20%-point increase for endline.

⁸ Three countries do not expect a full 10% points increase for midterm, and four countries have targets less than 25% points increase for end line, see annex 3 for more information.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|---|---|----------------------------|--|--|--------------|------------------------------------|--|
| | | | | | | | indicator should not be aggregated | |
| 1.4 | 1.4.1 % (& #) of schools with functional risk informed school improvement plans, in place | 23% (100 schools) Updated baseline: 23% (99 schools) ⁹ | Not reported ¹⁰ | Mid-term target: 50% of schools End line target: 75% of schools Revised End-line target: 60% of schools | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | FRI-SIP tool | | Colombia, Guatemala , Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda |
| | 1.4.2 Qualitative studies: How can participatory school management support improved and safer quality learning in school? | | | | | | | Malawi, Nepal, Somalia, Uganda |
| | 1.4.3 Qualitative studies: Local civil society's (communities) contribution to improved learning outside school. | | | | | | | Guatemala, Lebanon, Palestine, Uganda |

⁹ Baseline values were updated for Somalia in 2021.

¹⁰ Endline has not been reported at aggregated level due to challenges with the data calculation platform. See narrative report for country specific reporting under this outcome.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|--|--|--|--|--|----------------------------------|----------|--|
| 1.5 | 1.5.1 # of educational policies and plans developed and/or revised, including policies on inclusive education, with support by SC, by type of policy and level (national and/or sub-national) (Norad 1.3.1) | See footnote on gap analysis ¹¹ | Endline achievement: 21 documents developed/revised 4 at national level, 17 at sub-national | Mid-term target: 5 documents developed/revised End-line target: 17 documents developed/revised 4 on national level and 13 on sub national level | Annually Detailed analysis for midterm (2021) and end line (2023) | Gap analysis and project reports | | Colombia, Nepal, Niger, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda |
| | 1.5.2 Qualitative studies: Contribution of civil society organizations (SC included) and partners to hold duty bearers to account for children's right to safe, quality education | | | | | | | Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, South Sudan |

Table 1: Outcome indicators: Children learn and are safe
Outcome indicators: Children are Protected

¹¹ Gap analysis have identified the needs within thematic area: Inclusive education policy; Early Development policy; general education policy/procedures, and school security and safety. Four documents will be at national level, while remaining 13 on sub-national level.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|---|---|---|---|--|--|----------|---|
| 2.1 | 2.1.1 % and/or # married girls and teenage mothers re-enrolled to schools | 260 girls Updated baseline: 252¹² | Endline achievement: 1196 girls re-enrolled during 2023. | Mid-term target: 1000 girls End-line target: 2000 girls Revised End-line target: 1000 girls | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Project case follow-up records and school records | | Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Uganda |
| | 2.1.2 Proportion of girls who drop out of school because of child marriage and teenage pregnancy | 10% ¹³ Updated Baseline: 9%¹⁴ | Endline achievement: 10% | Mid-term target: 6% End-line target: 3% Revised End-line target: 11% ¹⁵ | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Attendance registers and records from target schools | | Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda, Nepal ¹⁶ |

¹² Niger was omitted from BL as data was not collected at EL. This to ensure comparability btw BL and EL, for EL reporting.

¹³ SCN has concerns for under-reporting and will investigate further how to better capture this data at country level.

¹⁴ Niger was omitted from BL, as data was not collected at EL. This to ensure comparability btw BL and EL, for EL reporting.

¹⁵ The higher end-line targets is primarily driven by the high midterm value in Malawi. Due to different development at midterm and few countries with comparable data, the end-line should pay more attention to country specific reporting, rather than aggregated results.

¹⁶ Nepal will not report directly on this indicator. They will report on proportion of girls affected by early marriage and/ or teenage pregnancy, who drop out of school.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|---|---|--|--|--|---|----------|--|
| 2.2 | 2.2.1 % (& #) of community members who believe child marriage is an unacceptable practice, by sex ¹⁷ | 64% (2328 community members) (f:63%; m: 65%) Updated baseline: 66% (2,315 community members) (f: 66%; m:67%)¹⁸ | Endline achievement: 78% (2,758 community members) (f: 76%, m: 80%) | Mid-term target: 71% (f: 71%; m: 71%) End-line target: 80% (f: 80%; m: 80%) | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Knowledge, attitudes and practice surveys | | Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, Uganda |
| | 2.2.2 % (& #) of communities which have taken collective social actions against declared themselves free of child marriage ¹⁹ | 11% (18 communities) | Endline achievement: 53% (94 communities) | Mid-term target: 35% End-line target: 65% Revised End-line target: 50% | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Project reports, public declarations | | Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Uganda |

¹⁷ This indicator is rephrased from: % of community members who have demonstrated a change in attitude towards early marriage, disaggregated by sex & age

¹⁸ Updated baseline value from Niger due to a change in the implementation area.

¹⁹ Indicator phrasing updated to better reflect work done through the programme

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|---|---|---|--|--|---|----------|--|
| | 2.2.3 % (& #) of children aged 1-17 years who experienced any physical punishment and/or psychological aggression by parents/caregivers in the past month (sex and disability) | Reported by caregivers: 81% (2373 children) (g: 81%; b:81%) CWDs: 100% ²⁰ Reported by children: 32% (g: 27%; b:39%) CWDs: 32% (g: 31%; b: 36%) Updated baseline: Reported by caregivers: 88% (G88%; B: 87%) ²¹ | Endline achievement: Reported by caregivers: 62% (G:63%; B: 61%) CWDs: 74% (G:72%; B: 76%) ²² Reported by children: 15% (G:11%; B: 18%) ²³ | Reported by caregivers Mid-term target: 65% (g:65%; b: 65%) End-line target: 50% (g:50%; b: 50%) Revised End-line target: 62% (f: 62%; b: 62%) Reported by Children Mid-term target: 32% (g:27%; b: 39%) CWDs: 40% (g:32%; b: 48%) End-line target: | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Caregiver survey (Parenting without violence) Child self-reporting | | Guatemala, ²⁴ Myanmar, ²⁵ Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda Mozambique, Palestine Lebanon |

²⁰ Only Myanmar reporting at baseline.

²¹ 2021 updated pending baseline values for Somalia and Lebanon included, Guatemala and Myanmar are omitted due to lack of comparable data (Baseline vs Endline).

²² Reporting countries: Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda

²³ Mozambique only, Palestine did not collect endline data.

²⁴ Guatemala was not able to collect representative data at endline, hence they are omitted from aggregated baseline and endline calculations.

²⁵ Myanmar did not report comparable data from baseline to endline.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|---|---|--|--|--|---|----------|---|
| | | Self-reported by children: Mozambique only EL reporting country: 30% (G.23%; B: 38%) | | 24% (g: 24%; b: 24%) CWDs: 24% (g:24%; b:24%) | | | | |
| | 2.2.4 % (& #) of parents who believe that punishment is acceptable, by sex | 63% (2054 parents/ caretakers) (f:65%; m: 57%) Updated baseline: 65% (F: 67%; M: 57) ²⁶ | Endline achievement: 20% (F: 21%; M: 17%) ²⁷ | Mid-term target: 52% (f:54%; m: 48%) End-line target: 42% (f:42%; m: 42%) Revised End-line target: 30% (f: 30%, m: 30%) | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Caregiver survey (Parenting without violence) | | Guatemala, Myanmar, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda + Lebanon ²⁸ |
| 2.3 | 2.3.1 % (& #) of child protection cases, among those | 42% (406 cases) (cases on girls: 39%; cases on boys: 48%) | Endline achievement: | Mid-term target: 60% (for girls; 60%; for boys 60%) End-line target: | Annually In depth analysis at midterm (2021) | Reports and records of child protection | | Guatemala, Myanmar, Nepal, Somalia, South |

²⁶ 2021 updated pending baseline values for Somalia and Lebanon included, Guatemala and Myanmar are omitted due to lack of comparable data (Baseline vs Endline).

²⁷ Reporting countries: Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, Lebanon

²⁸ Lebanon included this indicator at midterm due to uptake of the SCI Parenting without Violence (PwV) approach.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|---|--|---|--|--|------------------------------|----------|---|
| | reported during the last 12 months, that were responded to by CP mechanisms (sex and disability) | Updated Baseline²⁹ 55% (478 cases) (g: 57%; b: 54%) | 75% (6272 individual cases) (G: 74%; B: 76%) | 75% (for girls: 75%; for boys: 75%) | and end line (2023) | referral and response actors | | Sudan and Uganda ³⁰ |
| | 2.3.2 % (& #) of community child protection mechanisms supported by SC that are active in reporting and referring child protection cases | 33% (30 CBCPMs) ³¹ Updated baseline: ³² 35% (40 CBCPMs) | Endline achievement: 75% (118 CBCPM) | Mid-term target: 60% End-line target: 80% Revised End-line target: 70% | Baseline (2019) Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Project reports | | Guatemala, Myanmar, Nepal, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda |
| | 2.3.3 Qualitative studies: How have child protection mechanisms supported children with disabilities | | | | | | | Guatemala and South Sudan |

Table 2: Outcome indicators: Children are protected *Outcome indicators: Children's Rights*

²⁹ Reporting at baseline in 2019: Nepal, Somalia and Uganda. BL is updated to include South Sudan BL values collected in 2021.

³⁰ Myanmar and Guatemala will establish reporting system in parallel with programme implementation, and will be included for end-line reporting separately.

³¹ Reporting countries at baseline: Nepal, Somalia, Uganda.

³² BL is updated to include South Sudan BL values collected in 2021.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting | | |
|---------|--|-------------------|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| 3.1 | 3.1.1 Proportion of civil society partner capacity enhancement milestones met | N/A ³³ | Endline Achievement: 86% of planned milestones being met (73 partners assessed) | 50% midterm 75% end line | Annually In depth analysis at midterm (2021) and end line (2023) including case studies | Project reports, capacity strengthening plans | This is also a global indicator for all SC international programs | Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda | | |
| | 3.1.2 Qualitative study: Practice of systematic government consultation with civil society actors engaged with children's rights on policy formulation, legislation and programming | | | | | | | | | Colombia, Guatemala, Nepal; Myanmar; Mozambique ³⁴ |
| | 3.1.3: Qualitative study: An analysis of capacity building of children and youth participating in child-clubs and their active participation in civil society in general, and advocacy work in particular. | | | | | | | | | TBD ³⁵ |
| 3.2 | 3.2.1 Number of supplementary reports prepared and submitted | N/A | Endline achievement: 33 reports prepared and submitted (7 child led, 26 child informed). | 60% mid term 75% end line | Midterm (2021) End line (2023) | Project reports | Baseline is MTR data from current | Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, | | |

³³ This indicator does not have a numerical baseline as the capacity strengthening initiative will commence with the start of the programs. In 2019 70 partner organisations had done capacity assessment upon which capacity milestones have been identified.

³⁴ Myanmar and Mozambique are new countries reporting on this indicator.

³⁵ Based on annual reporting 2019 SCN will do an assessment of the quality of activities and groups within this area for each country office. This will be the foundation for selecting which country offices are best suited for reporting on this indicator.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | to international bodies that are child-led/informed | | Additional 8 prepared, but not yet submitted (2 child led; 6 child informed). | Revised End-line target: 22 reports (7 child led) | | | Norad programs | Niger, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda |
| | | 3.2.2 Qualitative study: Children's own perceptions on the quality of their participation in supplementary reporting processes | | | | | | |
| 3.3 | 3.3.1 # of policies or legislative change to institutionalize children's rights that has been adopted with support of Save the Children ³⁷ Properly resourced government children's strategy or implementation plan (including national plan | N/A | Endline achievement: 134 changes (8 Laws, 24 Policies, guidelines/procedures) ³⁸ . | End-line target: 75 (7 Laws, 16 Policies, 52 Guidelines and procedures, at national and sub-national level) | Annually In depth analysis at midterm (2021) and end line (2023) including case studies) | Country annual budgets, reports from UNCRC, etc. | This is global indicator being introduced for all SC international programs. | Colombia, Guatemala, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Uganda, Somalia |

³⁶ Niger is a new country reporting on this indicator.

³⁷ Change in indicator to better reflect work in programme, shared with Norad annual report 2020.

³⁸ Due to the decentralised government structure in Nepal, 103 reported changes been in Nepal only. This leave 31 changes for the reaining reporting countries.

| Outcome | Indicator | Baseline | Endline | Targets | Frequency | Data Sources | Comments | Countries reporting |
|---------|--|----------|---------|---------|-----------|--------------|----------|---------------------|
| | of action of action, children's act or follow up on UNCRC recommendations) | | | | | | | |

Table 3: Outcome indicators: Children's

ANNEX 2: Endine Methodology- End Of Programme Report - Leaving No Child Behind 2019-2023

Comparability between baseline (2019) and endline (2023) - reporting countries.

During endline in 2023, the programme was able to collect comparable data in 10 of 12 countries with two exceptions: Myanmar, which after the Coup in 2021 changed implementation modality establishing “a new baseline” in 2021 and by endline reports comparably from 2021 to 2023, and Occupied Palestinian Territory which was not able to collect endline data in 2023, and reports comparable from 2019 to 2021. Aside from these exceptional cases, the comparability and quality of the endline data is pointedly stronger than the midterm-data reported in 2021, as not only have 10 of 12 countries (compared to 7 of 12 in 2021) collected comparable data, but also countries adhered to our original baseline sampling strategy.¹

For aggregated indicators baselines have been updated to facilitate for comparability. This was first done in 2021, where pending 2019 baselines were included.² In 2023 further adjustments were made to ensure the same “universe” in terms of reporting countries for both evaluation-points. In short this means that 2019 values from Myanmar and OPT have been removed, in addition to a few countries which have not been able to collect comparable endline on selected indicators.³ Due to these variations and updates, change at aggregated level in the narrative and the log frame is only shown from 2019 to 2023. Midterm results are only included for individual countries in the narrative where this is seen as relevant to explain the trend across the five years.

Conducting outcome monitoring– process and involvement

SCN encouraged country offices manage outcome monitoring processes themselves and only employ external consultants where necessary. SCN supported country offices from planning through implementation and analysis and emphasis was given to establishing a broad understanding of the content of the monitoring, involving both MEAL staff (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning), technical advisors and operational staff at country office level and in SCN.

For the most part, the outcome monitoring was managed with internal resources. For data-collection, programme staff, operational staff, partner staff, government employees and teachers took part. For selected larger assessment (surveys) some country offices hired external enumerators to support the process.

Data cleaning and analysis was done at country office level, with guidance and support from SCN. At country office level MEAL and programme staff engaged in analysis of data and facilitated discussion on what implications results had programme implementation.

Feedback from country offices suggests that broad involvement increased ownership of the data and interest across several layers in the organization and amongst partners. Many countries reported

¹ For methodological adaptations at MTR, incl. reduced sample size, see Annex 3 in “Leaving No Child Behind – progress Report 2019 -2021, QZA – 1810373” *Redd Barna* 2022.

² See footnotes in Annex 2: Revised Results Framework (*ibid*).

³ See footnotes in annex: Final Results Framework.

useful and engaging discussions emerged from shared processes; however, some country offices expressed challenges in securing time for all relevant staff to participate at all points in the process.

Building MEAL capacity at country offices has been a priority from SCN's side through the process. The complexity of the programme, country office's individual log-frames combined with introduction of new tools and calculation methods has been a heavy lift for many countries. While most country offices have managed sufficiently, staff turnover and limited time allocation have posed challenges in some countries. A key learning for SCN here is the need for continued capacity building support.

Sampling Methods and Procedure

SCN provided a sampling guidelines and support to country offices. Instructions focused on how to determine the sampling size and structures, using measuring literacy proficiency as the point of departure. A two-stage sampling was used. The sampling frame for schools were all intervention schools in the programme, while for students the sampling frame were the total number of students in selected grade.

Based on experience from Norad Framework 2015-2018, expected proportion of students which will meet proficiency level were included to calculate the sample size of students in the formula $\text{Var}(p) = p(100-p)/(n-1)$, where:

- $\text{Var}(p)$ = is the margin of error in a two-tailed test. Recommended margin of error was 5%
- p = is the proportion of those who pass the test with recommended confidence level of 95%
- $n = \text{SRS}_n$ = is the unknown sample size of students to be calculated using Simple Random Sampling (SRS)

The sample size was adjusted by calculating a country specific design effect (DEFF)⁴ and an expected response rate (RR) of 95%.

Decision on number of sampled schools were calculated based on the formula: $a = (\text{SRS}_n/b) \times (1 + (b - 1) \times \text{ICC})$; where

- $1 + (b - 1) \times \text{ICC}$ is the DEFF
- a is the number of schools to be sampled;
- b is the average number of students we decide to sample from each sampled school;
- ICC is the intra-cluster correlation;
- SRS_n is the sample size calculated initially before adjusting using a DEFF

The minimum requirement suggested was 30 schools sampled. If less than 30, census was recommended.

Same procedure was used to determine sampling for all indicators related to people.

In the interest of cost-efficiency and ensuring multiple data-sources from the same communities, additional indicators were sampled in the same schools or surrounding communities. This laid the foundation for comparison and analysis between indicators, from the same locations, though created challenges in practical data collection.⁵ For example, the number of surveys carried out at the same location, or children spending too much time responding to surveys. These have been key learnings

⁴ Where existing data to calculate the DEFF were not available, recommended DEFF was 1,5

⁵ Detailed sampling guidelines (2019-2023) is available upon request.

for SCN in how to balance analytical needs with collection burdens for enumerators and respondents alike.

There were, unfortunately, instances where the sampling procedures have not been fully followed. These were cases where the costs were assessed as too high in meeting our recommended number of schools or individuals, or where a programme intervention focused on a target group (for example teachers) which was not large enough in number. In COs where the number of intervention schools was not large enough for the advised procedure, a simple random sampling was employed. These instances have mostly been discussed with SCN advisors, and we generally consider the samples to be sufficiently representative.

All country offices have developed a detailed MEAL plan, housing specific information on sampling procedures and sample size calculations.

Data collection tools and analysis

SCN provided two guiding principles to the country offices in selecting data collection tools; to streamline tools used at country office level (where relevant using governmental tools) and to merge tools concerning different topics addressing the same stakeholder, to reduce data-collection and participant burden.

In cases where country offices did not have existing tools which could be used, SCN supported with tool development and adaptation. One example is the caregiver survey used to collect indicator 2.2.3 and 2.3.4. This originates from the SC programme approach called “Parenting without Violence” and was used by six countries. For three of these, it was the first time they were exposed to the tool and so they were supported to translate and adapt it to their context. This now means that country offices have contextualized tools ready for use with other programmes and has laid the foundation for a country level database with comparable data between SC programmes/ projects.

The Washington Group Short Set questionnaire and the WG/UNICEF Child Functioning Module (CFM) questionnaire (which will be both referred to as WGQs in this report), were used to collect information related to children with disabilities. Country offices were guided to include the disability questions in their main data collection tool for a given indicator, where it was relevant and feasible that the indicator was disaggregated on disability. As the tools were new to most country offices at baseline, SCN recommended using them with at least one indicator where this disaggregation would be relevant. While all country offices were eager to ensure proper documentation of children with disabilities, some were also reluctant to include these tools at baseline, as they feared complexity of data-collection. Based on lessons learned from the baseline, SCN scaled up its training of country offices in using WGQs for data-collection.⁶ In 2023 all 10 reporting countries collected WGQs in connection to their literacy assessment (compared to 6 in 2019), and several also for other indicators. However, there are still challenges with representativeness, particular for data collected from children in school-settings. SCN in collaboration with SCI will continue to strengthen the documentation of children with disabilities.

During the framework, country offices and SCN have seen the benefit for streamlining the tools across different awards, enabling comparability at both country office level and global level. This work will continue in the Norad Framework Agreement 2024-2028 aligned with SCI’s efforts to

⁶ See Report: Quality of disability data and disability inclusion in countries included in Norad Framework Agreement 2019-2023, Save the Children Norway, August 2022

increase global comparable reporting. Training of staff, to understand the content and procedures of the tools, will still be relevant.

Throughout the evaluation points data-collection tools became increasingly digitalized in line with technological development. This has in large been driven by the broader technological development at country offices, with KoBo being the primary platform used. While this has enhanced data-accuracy for country offices and for selected country office automated country specific analysis, utilizing this for comparing across countries have fallen short due to different standards. Going forward, SCN will support the country offices to align with SCI data and analytics standards.

SCN and Country Office MEAL teams have worked hard to provide meaningful analysis of data to thematic advisors and programmatic decision makers. This in part due to the context of limited resources, the scale of data collection, and the complexity of analysis across the participating country contexts. Along with our digitalization efforts, our aim is to streamline not only the tools for collecting data, but also for analyzing data in a program-focused way, ensuring meaningful analysis for programs. This necessitates the adoption of new systems for analytics, but also in focusing our efforts on data which yield the most programmatically meaningful information. Efforts have already begun to revise collection tools, adapt them to digital modalities, and plan for automated analysis.

Ethics and child safeguarding

Save the Children is attentive to adhering to ethics and child safeguarding guidelines during data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This includes adhering to SCI's Data Protection Policy, which aligns with EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Where necessary, data collection has been approved with national and/or local governments.

To protect personal data and the privacy of data subjects, Save the Children collected data from data subjects (both children and adults) that gave informed consent or informed assent. The administration of informed consent/assent varies from country to country based on the usual practice in each country.

Country offices were also advised to protect personal data by anonymizing data using a unique respondent (data subject) identification number. It was discouraged to collect personal data, including names, that could enable identifying a person unless it was necessary and its collection was justifiable. Save the Children has provided restricted storage space to store data collected at baseline, midterm, and endline.

In addition to the ethics guidelines and practices, follow-up was done to ensure that the country office adhered to Save the Children's Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct. For example, the country office staff, consultants, and external enumerators who participated in collecting, processing, and transferring or storing collected data were required to be trained on and signed to adhere to the Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct. Furthermore, country offices were required to closely monitor the data-collection processes to identify and redress the soonest possible, any risks and potential harms against children.

Going forward generative AI presents significant ethical challenges in research, monitoring, and evaluation, particularly concerning data breaches and analytical accuracy. The extensive data required for training generative models increases the risk of unauthorized access and potential misuse of sensitive information. Additionally, as with human interpretation, AI systems might misinterpret or inaccurately convey the nuances of research findings, leading to erroneous conclusions and potentially harmful decisions. However, if implemented safely, ethically, and with

informed consent, AI holds the promise of substantially reducing the reporting and analysis burden, streamlining data processing, and enhancing the overall efficiency of research activities. Robust data protection measures and rigorous validation protocols are essential to ensure AI-driven analyses are both reliable and secure, ultimately benefiting the research community and society at large. Finally, there are significant considerations to take regarding training human users of AI to follow guidelines and develop safe and efficient habits for AI interaction.

ANNEX 3_ Summary of evaluations and studies finalized during 2023-2024

End of programme report for leaving no child behind 2019-2023

Save the Children's Work on Child Protection and Child Rights in Mozambique and South Sudan

External review – Commissioned by Norad¹.

The evaluation examines Save the Children's efforts in child protection and rights in Mozambique and South Sudan. In Mozambique, the focus is on reducing child marriage and teenage pregnancies among schoolgirls to enable their education and life skills acquisition. The intermediate goals include changing norms related to child marriage and enhancing access to quality education for children affected by gender-based violence. Key activities involve community dialogues, engagement with community leaders, information campaigns, and strengthening reporting mechanisms. The Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs) are pivotal in identifying and reporting cases of child marriage.

A significant milestone in Mozambique was the enactment of a law criminalizing child marriage under 18 in 2019. Save the Children and partners have increased awareness of the law in communities and improved reporting of violence against children. Data indicate a notable reduction in school dropouts, including those due to child marriage. Nonetheless, challenges persist, such as the low prosecution rate of child marriage cases and the necessity for more accurate data on attitudes toward and prevalence of child marriage.

In South Sudan, the program aims to institutionalize children's rights in law and practice, with objectives including strengthening civil society organizations and government capacity for implementing and monitoring child rights and enhancing children's participation in social accountability systems. Save the Children has been pivotal in forming the Child Rights Coalition and influencing policies to combat child marriage and promote inclusive education. Despite national-level challenges, progress has been made at the state level, with laws prohibiting early and forced child marriage enacted in Lakes State.

Partner organizations have achieved capacity enhancement milestones, and advancements have been made in monitoring and reporting on child rights. Child clubs and parliaments provide platforms for children to learn about and exercise their rights, although representation and participation from all regions are lacking. The program's scope is confined to children in school, and the interaction between child clubs and social accountability groups is ambiguous.

Overall, the evaluation acknowledges progress in both countries concerning legal reforms, awareness, and advocacy for child protection and rights. However, it underscores the necessity for more precise data, better alignment of initiatives with local curricula, and broader inclusion of out-of-school children.

¹ Gichohi, Matthew and Ottar Maestad. (2023). Save the Children's Work on Child Protection and Child Rights in Mozambique and South Sudan. Christian Michelsen's Report, Number 2 (June), Bergen. [CMI Report 2023 Save the Children's work on child protection and child rights in Mozambique and South Sudan.pdf](#)

Leaving No Child Behind – A Study of Inclusive Education with a Focus on Disability Inclusion²

The evaluation provides a critical analysis of the Inclusive Education program, focusing on the integration of children with disabilities. Drawing from field studies conducted in Guatemala and Palestine, as well as virtual interviews from Mozambique, it highlights both progress and inconsistencies in educational inclusion for children with disabilities.

Despite training for teachers to recognize and assist children with disabilities, there's a notable gap in proactive identification and referrals for comprehensive diagnosis. While the Washington Group Questions aid preliminary assessments, they fall short in refining program strategies, indicating a need for supplementary tools or enhanced training on data application.

In Palestine, a committee with expertise in education and disability led the program's inception. The process involved analyzing existing challenges, structuring the program, and establishing relevant indicators. Educational institutions were selected based on their enrollment of children with disabilities, with a six-month planning period deemed adequate.

Conversely, in Guatemala, the initiative targeted low school attendance and high dropout rates, especially among indigenous girls and children with disabilities. Minimal engagement from these groups hindered the program's effectiveness, although data collection on enrollment was successful.

In Mozambique, involving Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPDs) in program design workshops was notable. OPDs were also engaged during execution for specific tasks.

Overall, the assessment emphasizes the importance of collaborative engagement among stakeholders in program design. It identifies obstacles in integrating disability inclusion into educational programs and calls for nuanced efforts to address the unique needs of children with disabilities, advocating for genuine equity beyond mere equality.

School Leadership and Management (SLAM) Pilot Evidence Review³

The School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Project, launched by Save the Children in the Dailekh District of Nepal, sought to improve educational leadership in rural schools. The three-year project, aligned with Save the Children's Quality Learning Framework, collaborated with head teachers, education officials, and community members from 14 schools to develop leadership skills for improved educational outcomes.⁴ The evidence review compiles data from the 2019-2023 project, including baseline and endline surveys, progress markers, Sahayatra-II program data, and interviews with the project team.

Findings show that school leaders improved their accountability, engaging the school stakeholders in evaluation, and school progress and needs; improved their transparency through clearer roles and

² Stone Soup. 2023. Leaving No Child Behind – A Study of Inclusive Education with a Focus on Disability Inclusion. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

³ Informed International. 2024. School Leadership and Management (SLAM) Pilot Evidence Review. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

⁴ Informed International 2021. School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Project in Nepal – using a Developmental Evaluation Approach, Save the Children Norway, Oslo

responsibilities, and increased communication of school plans and achievements; and improved participation through community and parental engagement in the school governance.

Ultimately, educational outcomes were enhanced, with students in SLaM schools performing better in reading and numeracy than in non-SLaM schools. Similarly SLaM teachers showed better teaching and classroom management skills than their counterparts. This highlights the model's capacity to elevate educational outcomes through focused leadership and community-engaged educational practices.

The project embedded core principles for school leadership and management, ranging from improving learning and well-being, fostering inclusive education, to ensuring political neutrality, with participants making strides in aligning activities with these principles. A notable development was the move towards distributed leadership, with increased engagement from teachers, parents and community members in school management decisions. Ongoing self-evaluations and reflections on the principles pinpointed improvement areas, promoting a continuous learning culture.

The review emphasizes the effectiveness of a principle-based approach, early community engagement, and iterative development using DE for the program's relevance and longevity.

The SLaM Pilot Project serves as a model for enhancing school leadership and management through a community-specific, principle-based strategy, offering the potential for significant improvements in educational outcomes across different regions.

Phase-out Country Sustainability Re-assessment⁵

The sustainability re-assessment of Save the Children's programs funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) across Cambodia, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe from 2010 to 2020 has yielded valuable insights.

In Cambodia, Norad-funded programs demonstrate sustainability, with methodologies being maintained and scaled up. Save the Children Cambodia (SCI Cambodia) continues to collaborate effectively with the government and other organizations, potentially leading to lasting structural changes.

Ethiopia's program has made significant impacts and fostered strong partnerships, successfully transferring responsibilities at phase-out. However, sustainability challenges arise from conflicts, climate shocks, and financial constraints, underscoring the need for flexible phase-out frameworks adaptable to changing contexts.

Despite challenges in Mozambique, Save the Children's contributions at the provincial level are noteworthy. However, the program's future impact depends on factors partly beyond its control, such as government funding and maintaining activity levels.

Nicaragua's program faced setbacks due to significant contextual changes, casting uncertainty on its long-term impacts, largely contingent on factors beyond Save the Children's influence.

Zimbabwe's program has demonstrated positive and sustained results, with methodologies widely adopted by partners. Notable successes include the Quality Learning Environment approach and integration of disaster risk reduction into government policies. However, socio-economic challenges

⁵ Oslo Economics.2024. Phase-out Country Sustainability Re-assessment. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

and limited resources pose risks to sustainability, compounded by constraints in monitoring local activities post-phase-out.

The assessment emphasizes context-sensitive approaches, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability to external conditions. Save the Children can have a high-impact role in favorable contexts and should focus resources where interests align for lasting impact. Flexible program design, risk mitigation in phase-out plans, and improved monitoring systems are recommended to enhance sustainability and measure long-term impact. Documenting and measuring sustainability are crucial for understanding Save the Children's lasting impact and learning from best practices.

The Generation of Participation and Hope in Lebanon Evaluation of the Perception of Children and Adolescents Regarding their Participation in the SC-NORAD Project in Guatemala and SCN- The Country Offices of Lebanon and Guatemala⁶

Working in partnership with Save the Children Norway (SCN), the Country Offices in Guatemala and Lebanon conducted participatory research to explore the perspectives of children and adolescents on their level of involvement. This research involved consultations, focus groups, workshops, and interviews, enabling young participants to voice their opinions, evaluations, and recommendations. These insights are pivotal for expanding youth involvement in various organizational activities, including meetings, workshops, and collaborative efforts with supporting institutions.

In Guatemala, the research focused on understanding the experiences of Maya Ixil and Maya Chortí youths. Despite their diverse backgrounds and demanding daily lives, which include educational commitments and household duties, these children and adolescents find value and recognition within their families. However, they have observed a tendency for community leaders to overlook their input.

Since 2019, a collaboration between Save the Children and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) has established community groups and School Governments in Guatemala. These platforms provide extracurricular and leadership development opportunities, attracting voluntary participation from children interested in engaging with topics relevant to their lives. Save the Children further supports these groups by providing training to enhance their organizational and leadership skills.

In Lebanon, participatory action research was conducted to capture children's views on their engagement with Save the Children's programs. Committed to the principles of UNCRC Article 12, which champions the right of children to participate in decision-making, the research was inclusive, involving children from underprivileged Palestinian camps with diverse backgrounds.

The study not only equipped children with valuable skills, such as public speaking, writing, photography, advocacy, decision-making, and research but also led to increased participation in their personal and community spheres. The children's feedback was instrumental in identifying ways to improve child participation, such as enhancing involvement in needs assessments, allowing ample time for child-led research, incorporating visual aids for better understanding, and increasing the number of participants in research activities.

⁶ Save the Children Norway and Save the Children Guatemala. 2004. Evaluation of Children and Adolescents regarding their Participation in the SC-Norad Project in Guatemala. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

Save the Children is dedicated to tailoring its activities and programs to the feedback received from children, aiming to empower civil society to address the rights of refugee children in Palestinian camps more effectively. The NORAD-funded programs primarily focus on creating better educational environments and ensuring the fulfillment of children's rights.

Overall, the initiatives in Guatemala and Lebanon underscore the importance of including the voices of children and adolescents in decision-making processes that affect them. Save the Children's commitment to these regions is evident in its efforts to empower young people by encouraging active participation in skill development and ensuring their perspectives are integral to shaping programs designed for their benefit.

Exploratory Learning Study on Child-Centered Social Accountability (CCSA) in Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia⁷

SCN study in participation with the Country Offices of Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia

The study evaluated the effectiveness of the Child-Centered Social Accountability (CCSA) program in Somalia and South Sudan by examining the level of involvement of children and community members.

In Somalia, the CCSA initiative bolstered community and child engagement in social accountability, employing tools like the community scorecard. Adults were recruited through transparent community meetings, while children were briefed in schools and selected based on academic performance, enthusiasm for social accountability, and willingness to participate. Both groups received training on social accountability practices and their rights, focusing on improving education and health services. Children were provided platforms to communicate their needs to service providers and officials, ensuring their voices were heard.

Save the Children International (SCI) empowered Somali Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to implement CCSA activities, enhancing their capacity to engage communities and promote governmental accountability. A digital community of practice facilitated shared learning, while review meetings offered insights into best practices. However, there was a recognized need for increased guidance from experienced specialists and a call for more mentoring, coaching, and international learning opportunities to refine CCSA activities.

In South Sudan, the CCSA process was deemed equitable, offering all children, including those with disabilities, the opportunity to gather and share data. The program instilled a sense of accountability and encouraged balanced participation. However, the selection method was critiqued for being somewhat selective and not fully inclusive of individuals with disabilities. Children developed a deeper understanding of their rights and the importance of self-expression, fostering community-wide respect for children's rights.

Participants in the CCSA program were educated on various topics, from child rights to safety and preventing harmful societal practices. However, the training lacked sufficient coverage of specific roles and responsibilities within CCSA, as well as action and follow-up procedures. Adults appeared to grasp their CCSA roles better than children, who primarily learned about their duties within child rights clubs.

⁷ Save the Children Norway, Save the Children Ethiopia, Save the Children Somalia, and Save the Children South Sudan.2024. Exploratory Learning Study on Child-Centered Social Accountability (CCSA) in Somalia, South Sudan, and Ethiopia. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

This underscores the need for more comprehensive training for all involved parties, including CSOs, government bodies, and educational administrators, to clarify their roles within CCSA activities.

Overall, the CCSA program has effectively engaged children and community members in its social accountability framework. However, there is room for further development, particularly in training and inclusivity, to ensure all participants are fully engaged and the program achieves its objectives.

Reliability and Feasibility of Child Functioning Module – Teacher Version: Findings from a pilot test conducted in Somalia⁸

SCN – Country Office in Somalia

The Child Functioning Module – Teacher Version (CFM-TV) underwent a pilot test in Somalia, a joint initiative by Save the Children Norway, UNICEF, USAID, Sight Savers, Humanity, and Inclusion. A February 2024 workshop hosted by the Washington Group and UNICEF focused on refining the CFM-TV and developing guidelines for its application in schools to identify children with disabilities. The tool's official release is scheduled for June 2024.

This pilot was embedded within a broader five-year development initiative (2019-2023) in Somalia emphasizing education, child protection, and rights. Data collection occurred in February 2022 across four Garowe district schools, a subset of the 47 schools involved in the project.

The test sampled 328 primary students from grades 3, 5, and 7, with an average age of 12, comprising 61% boys and 39% girls. Twenty-two teachers, 36% of whom were female, evaluated the students' disabilities over two months, covering 12 health-related functional domains.

Interrater reliability analysis, including percent disagreement and Cohen's Kappa, was used to gauge the CFM-TV's reliability. The findings indicated less than 25% disagreement in nine domains, within the acceptable range for reliable assessment. However, the domains of anxiety, depression, and learning showed slightly higher disagreement rates.

Notably, the discrepancy between teacher assessments was over 65% lower in schools serving internally displaced children, highlighting the impact of conflict on children's psychosocial well-being.

In disability identification, teachers agreed on significant difficulties in 5% of learners. Cohen's Kappa revealed minimal to fair agreement across domains, except "remembering" and "controlling behavior," which showed fair agreement. The modest agreement levels reflect the low incidence of school-attending children with disabilities in Somalia. Yet, these Kappa values align with the percent disagreement results.

The report underscores the necessity of prolonged observation and interaction for teachers to recognize students' functional challenges accurately. It also advocates for targeted teacher training to enhance assessment reliability and practicality.

⁸ Save the Children Norway and Save the Children Somalia. 2024. Reliability and Feasibility of the Child Functioning Module – Teacher Version: Findings from a Pilot Test Conducted in Somalia. Save the Children Norway, Oslo.

The pilot findings were shared at the Comparative and International Education Society Conference in Miami (March 10-14, 2024), receiving considerable attention.

End of Program Learnings

The evaluations of SCN's programs across several countries provide insight into the successes and challenges in advancing gender equality, educational technology, child rights, and program sustainability. These evaluations collectively stress the importance of context-specific strategies, robust capacity building, program integration with local systems, and engaging children and communities to improve program efficacy and sustainability.

SCN's gender initiatives have made notable progress yet face challenges like inconsistent use of methodologies and varying levels of gender expertise across offices. Recommendations include bolstering gender-focused programming and establishing gender-focal points for all programs. The learning labs in Somalia have positively impacted literacy and numeracy but require better alignment with the national curriculum. In Mozambique and South Sudan, efforts to curb child marriage and enshrine child rights into law have been significant, though issues like low prosecution rates and reaching out-of-school children persist. The Inclusive Education program seeks to serve children with disabilities better but issues a call for more tailored approaches. The SLaM Pilot in Nepal demonstrates improved educational leadership, advocating for a principle-based and community-engaged approach. The sustainability re-assessment underscores the need for adaptable program designs and enhanced monitoring to maintain long-term impact. In Lebanon and Guatemala, youth participation in decision-making is emphasized, with SCN committed to integrating their feedback into program development. The CCSA program's involvement of children and communities in social accountability highlights a need for more comprehensive training. Lastly, the CFM-TV pilot in Somalia offers a promising tool for identifying children with disabilities, suggesting a need for focused teacher training to ensure effective implementation.

As we examine each program in detail, we recognize recurring themes: the necessity for tailored solutions, the critical role of building skills and knowledge, the need to weave programs into local systems better, and the importance of involving children in decisions that affect their lives. These evaluations offer a roadmap for understanding SCN's impact and inform future strategies, which have turned into program-level response plans, thus setting the stage for participatory learning and improved programming.

List of previously reported studies

1. School Leadership and Management (SLaM) Pilot Project in Nepal – using a Developmental Evaluation Approach, InformEd, December 2021
2. The Keystone Partnership Survey 2021, Keystone, March 2022
3. Save the Children's Programme to end Child Marriage and Adolescent Pregnancies in Malawi, Joar Svanemyr and Vibeke Wang, Chr. Michelsen Institute, March 2022
4. Save the Children Norway Localisation Baseline 2021, Patrick Crump and Zakir Hussain, 30. September 2022.

5. Assessing Stakeholders' Perception of Technology in Learning Labs Schools for the Norad Programme in Puntland, Somalia, 2022.
6. Quality of disability data and disability inclusion in countries included in the Norad Framework Agreement 2019-2023, Save the Children Norway, August 2022.
7. Save the Children Sustainability Principles: A synthesis report of sustainability of the Norad Funded Programs in four Phase-out Countries, Save the Children Norway, December 2022
8. Review of Save the Children's Gender Leave no child behind, Stephen Van Houten and Sarah Pugh, 20. February 2023



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